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# ALBANIA

## THE FOUNDLING STATE OF EUROPE

SCODRA.

The Castle with Mount Tarabosh in the background.

# ALBANIA

## THE FOUNDLING STATE OF EUROPE

BY

WADHAM PEACOCK.

FORMERLY PRIVATE SECRETARY TO H.B.M. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN MONTENEGRO AND CONSUL-GENERAL IN NORTH ALBANIA

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*THIS book deals with a phase in the history of Albania, which is passing away. The new King has arrived at his new capital, and the European ruler has replaced the Turkish Pasha. But the soul of the Shkypetar people remains the same, and the Albania of to-morrow will be the Albania of yesterday with only a superficial variation. In the Near East things, when they change, change slowly, and the transition from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century will not be accomplished by a stroke of the pen because Europe has at last recognised its foundling State.*

*Some of the chapters have appeared in "The Fortnightly Review," "Chambers' Journal" and other periodicals, to whose editors I make my acknowledgments. I have also to thank Lady Donegall, Mrs. Gordon and Mr. R. Caton Woodville for leave to use some of the photographs here reproduced.*

*WADHAM PEACOCK.*

*London, March, 1914.*

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# ALBANIA

## I

### IN EUROPE AND YET NOT OF IT

WITH the beginning of 1913 Albania suddenly awoke to find herself famous; for the newspaper reader became aware that there was such a district in Europe, in that mysterious Balkan peninsular occupied by Bulgarians, Servians and Greeks, some independent, and some crushed under the heel of the wicked Turk. Albanians, it is true, had been heard of even by those who were not experts in Near Eastern matters, but they were considered as Turks of a sort and as oppressors of the Christians, and it was something of a surprise to most people when the action of Austria and Italy —selfish action it may be—forced the Western Europeans to recognize that the Albanians are not Turks, but the oldest of European races, and that a very large proportion of them belong to the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. When Austria insisted on Albania being made into an independent state on the lines of Greece, Bulgaria,

Servia and Montenegro, the towns, rocks and plains of Albania began to emerge from the mediæval darkness in which they had been for so long enveloped, a darkness so intense that even Gibbon could write of the Albanians as a "vagrant tribe of shepherds and robbers," without any hint of who and what they really are. Now this ancient nation is to be given its place in Europe alongside the more modern Slavs who dispossessed it of the best part of its inheritance before the Turk was heard of in the Balkans, and who last year would gladly have swallowed up the scanty plains and sterile mountains in which it has eked out a warlike existence for nearly fifteen hundred years. During the past quarter of a century Albania, being in Europe and yet not of it, has hardly been touched by travellers, who have gone further afield to Asia and Africa, but have passed by the eastern shores of the Adriatic. The Consuls at Scutari and Prisrend were withdrawn when the country ceased to be of active interest to the European Chancelleries, and the few Europeans who did penetrate to the mountainous regions of North Albania paid more attention to the picturesque court of Cettigne than to the barren rocks and grim villages of the Shkypetars.

For those who have, or who had, to live in the country, Albania is one of the few places still left

in Europe where a man may feel in exile. Railways, steamers and telegraph lines have brought most parts of Europe within easy reach of the tourist. There is an English society of one sort or another in most foreign towns; and where there is no society there is a British merchant or two, or some one trying for a concession, or some one financing a railway. A man does not feel himself absolutely in exile when he can hear his own language spoken occasionally by residents or visitors, but in Scutari—or Scodra, as it should properly be called—we so seldom saw a traveller's face, or heard any English voices but our own, that we might fairly consider ourselves in exile. Not only was the place so difficult of access that it was almost impossible to reach it in less than eight or ten days on an average, but the post, that great solace of the exile, was extremely irregular. Letters came quickly enough as far as Trieste, but there they were put on board an Austrian Lloyd steamer and spent nearly a week dawdling down the Adriatic till they reached San Giovanni di Medua, which is one of the worst ports in what used to be European Turkey, and that is saying a great deal. Scodra is about twenty miles from the sea-coast, and each consulate possessed a postman who took it in his turn to ride down to the port to meet the steamer and to bring back the mails. When the

weather was bad the boats did not touch at Medua, and the postman had the pleasure of seeing the Lloyd go by to Corfu, and of spending the time at fever-stricken Medua somehow or other till its return. Sometimes there was quite a collection of postmen who had handed over their mailbags to the Lloyd agent and were waiting to receive the post when the steamer did touch. But supposing the gale to moderate sufficiently for this the difficulties of the postman were not over. We always talked of the "road" to Medua, but only by courtesy, for, strictly speaking, there was not even a track for the greater part of the way.

In the summer it was all plain sailing; the boats touched with commendable regularity, the river Drin was low, and the postman ambled along the level banks or occasionally in the dried-up bed of the stream. But in the winter it was a very different thing; the Drin has no respect for its banks, and, not content with flooding all the plain in the rainy season, carves out new courses for itself now and then which puzzle the most experienced postman. Sometimes the unfortunate official had to wade, sometimes he had to borrow a *londra*, or canoe, and paddle across the river; and sometimes he got intercepted for a week, and the precious mails, for which we were longing with the impatience only known to exiles, had to be

stored in a damp hut waiting till the rush of waters was past. The postal officials, too, in Europe had vague notions as to our whereabouts. A letter plainly addressed "Albania" was once sent to America, and returned from Albany, N.Y., with the inscription, "Try Europe"; and a parcel, after having been despatched from England, was no more heard of for months, until one fine day a Turkish postman arrived with it safe and sound. It had been sent to Constantinople by a clerk who was too sharp to pay attention to the address, and thence carried across the peninsula by a *zaptieh* at an enormous expense of time, trouble and money. Such little misadventures as those made us welcome very heartily the solemn face and long grizzled moustaches of Gian, the postman, as he jogged up the road from the bazaar with the mail-bags swinging at his saddle-bow. The telegraph was even more irregular, for even if it was not broken down the Pasha was always telegraphing to Constantinople for instructions. But these things will all belong to yesterday when the new state has been constituted by Europe on the very latest principles, and so it is well to put them on record before they fade away utterly into the benighted past.

Scodra stands at the edge of a wide plain hemmed in on all sides by lofty mountains. To

the north-west the great lake of Scodra stretches away into Montenegro, its western bank shut in by the mountains which rise directly from its shore and separate it from the Adriatic sea, and its eastern bank a low fertile plain shut in, in its turn, by the mountains of the Malissori, or Roman Catholic Albanian tribes. Nearly due north rises the imposing mass of the Maranai mountain with the remains of the ancient city of Drivasto at its feet, through whose gorge issues the Kiri, a mere rivulet in summer but a furious torrent in the winter. Close under the Castle hill lies the city of Scodra, looking like a grove pierced with slender minarets, and with the weather-beaten red-tiled roofs of its houses showing through the trees. It is wedged in between the lake and the Castle hill at the south-west corner of the plain, and squeezed in between the Boiana and the rock is the bazaar, at once the market and the clubland of the town. Across the river stands Mount Tarabosh, whose modern fort the Montenegrins found such an impregnable obstacle, and then the river winds south-westwards through the lowlands to Dulcigno and the sea, while to the south the broad plain of the Zadrima stretches away to the low hills which shut in the wretched little seaport of San Giovanni di Medua. Away to the north at some distance from the lake and under the spurs of the Great Mountains, lies

the fortress village of Tusi which was once the head-quarters of the Albanian League, and which later on became famous as the scene of the revolt of the Albanian tribesmen against the Turks, and for its capture by the Montenegrins on October 14th, 1912.

There are three principal ways of reaching Scodra from Europe: by steamer across the lake from Montenegro; by launch up the river Boiana; and by horse-back across the Zadrima from San Giovanni di Medua. Of these the latter route is most in keeping with the spirit of the place, and in fact was almost the only way of reaching the city until a few years ago. San Giovanni di Medua is not an imposing looking seaport as one approaches it from the sea. Soon after passing the entrance to the Boiana the steamer rounds a low headland, and a long semi-circular sweep of flat sand comes into view, backed by low hills which end in an abrupt bluff to the north and sink away into swamps and marshes towards the south. Once landed on the desolate and uninviting beach the track follows the sandy shore of the Adriatic to the south, strikes inland across some marshy ground and, rounding the last spur of the hill, crosses the river Drin to the village of Alessio crouching under its ancient and half-ruined fortress. From Alessio the road, or rather track,

runs by the side of the Drin, following its curves and windings in the most irritating manner, and never seeming to get any nearer to the distant hills behind which lies the city of Scodra. It runs through the rich plain of the Zadrima, and varies with the height of the river Drin and with the state of the crops in the fields hard by. There are several villages on the route, the inhabitants of which are fairly well to do in spite of the miserable look of their houses and the uncared for state of the hedges and roads. But San Giovanni di Medua, Alessio, and the journey along the Drin through the valley of the Zadrima, deserve a chapter to themselves.

## II

### THE GATE OF NORTH ALBANIA

We had been steaming in leisurely fashion down the Adriatic from Trieste, past Zara, Ragusa, Cattaro and the other old-world towns along the rocky shore, until one morning soon after sunrise the screw of the ancient steamer ceased throbbing, and the word was passed round that we had reached San Giovanni di Medua. There was no apparent reason why a steamer should touch at such a place, were it not for the fact that the curve of sandy shore formed the harbour of San Giovanni di Medua, and was the principal entrance to North Albania from the Adriatic sea.

People's ideas of ports and harbours differ. Some think of Dover, and some of Southampton, if they are untravelled; or, those who have gone further afield, of Bombay and Singapore. But, unless they have been round Africa or the coasts of some Turkish province, they would never imagine that San Giovanni di Medua could make so much noise in the world as it did when the

Montenegrins and the Servians let Europe know that they coveted it.

The steamer came to an anchor out of the way of the sandbank which is the only drawback, and a slight one, to the better use of the harbour, but sheltered from the north wind by the hills which slope away north-west-by-north to Dulcigno. San Giovanni di Medua is a harbour at the head of a wide bay formed by the estuaries of the river Drin, but the traveller who expects docks, or piers, wharves, warehouses and all the rest of the advantages of civilization, will be disappointed. An isolated range of hills which stretches from the Boiana to the Drin at Alessio is the background to the scene, and to the south low and marshy land which might just as well be under the sea, scarcely slopes down to the Adriatic shallows of the bay. In a nick of the hills to the north, just above the harbour, were a few cottages, one of which was dignified by the name of the Lloyd Agent's residence, and another was known as the khan, or hotel. These, with the barracks of the Turkish soldiers and a few tents near the water's edge, made up this seaport which might be turned into a tolerable harbour if it were in European hands.

The docks and the wharves and the landing stages were represented by a long heap of stones

stretching out into the sea, and a pier is an absolute necessity, for the sea is so shallow that passengers have to be landed in small boats, and could they not scramble out on to this rickety heap of stones they would have to wade ashore. The small boats which take the passengers from the steamer to the pier were manned by boatmen whose appearance was that of brigands, and whose looks and gestures were those of all the ruffians of history and legend put together. These men were dressed in tight-fitting clothes of white felt embroidered with black; on their heads they wore white felt caps, in some cases bound round with a sort of turban of dirty white cotton; on their shoulders some of them wore a black sheepskin, and on their feet they wore raw hide sandals tied with leather straps. In their belts were arsenals of weapons, pistols and long knives, and with eyes flashing and moustaches bristling they argued at the top of their voices in guttural Albanian over the passengers, and seemed within an ace of coming to blows with their primitive oars, or of drawing the vicious-looking knives and blades from their belts. The timid and unaccustomed travellers might be excused for hesitating to entrust themselves to such theatrical-looking brigands, but the officers of the ship evidently looked on them as quite normal persons, and occasionally addressed them with polite

authority in Italian, which most of the boatmen could speak in moments of calm.

But for all their savage appearance and quarrelsome manners the boatmen of San Giovanni di Medua were fine, honest fellows, some of them from the mountains of Mirditia to the south-east of the port, and others of the Skreli tribe of Malissori from the Great Mountains east of the lake.

At last the passengers and their baggage were sorted out into the different boats, and silence suddenly fell on the furious group, only broken now and then by an encouraging shout or grunt as the men raced for the long, low heap of stones which formed our introduction to Turkish soil. As we happened to have H.B.M. Consul with us any Custom House nuisance that may usually be enforced was of course ignored, and no one ventured to lay a hand on the sacred baggage or to say a word to the fierce looking kavass who had taken charge of it when it reached the shore.

There is one change which will be infinitely for the worse now that semi-civilized kingdoms have replaced the Turk. In Turkey the Consular official of a Great Power, and of a little one if he could bluff sufficiently, was a sacred person, and his kavasses, though natives of the country and Turkish subjects, shared in his glory. An

Albanian kavass was a splendid dignitary. He treated the Turkish soldiers with the most lordly disdain, and they were his humble servants. His gorgeous, gold-embroidered clothes, his weapons, his bristling moustaches and his fierce air of command imposed on every one, even on the Turkish officers who had been any time in Albania and had not had a Frankish education.

But all this is passing away, and the Balkan states will prove their new independence and equality with Europeans by treating Consuls as quite ordinary folk in the lands where for many years past they have been little kings. Austria was very long-suffering with Servia over the treatment of Herr Prochaska, the Austro-Hungarian Consul at Prisrend. Had Turkish officers and troops acted in the same way and dared to oppose a Consul, the whole of Europe would have been in a blaze of indignation, telegrams would have been flying all over the Continent, the Ambassadors would have bullied the Sultan and the Porte out of their lives, Pashas would have been disgraced and generals cashiered for half of what the Servian officers did unrebuked, and the Turks would once more have been taught that even a Vali Pasha is as nothing by the side of a Consul.

But Europe is letting that happy state of things slip in the former provinces of Turkey.

The Consuls, instead of being the great men, will be nothing more than undistinguished foreigners whose word counts as nothing, and who are expected to order themselves civilly and humbly to the officials of the new dispensation. The change will be a sad one, and for some years by no means for the better.

Not that the Customs were ever very pressing in such out-of-the-way corners of Turkey, for a judicious expenditure of baksheesh always alleviated the rigours of the strict letter of the law. The major in charge of the ragged soldiers at San Giovanni di Medua sighed gently, for he saw his vision of special baksheesh for those many packages disappear before the royal arms on the kavass' fez, but with the exquisite courtesy of his race he invited us to sit on the rough divan which served as the resting-place so dear to the Turkish soul, outside his weather-stained tent. His shelter was a strip of coarse sail-cloth stretched from branch to branch of a consumptive tree to keep off the sun, and beneath it was a divan made of switches wattled together and covered with a tattered carpet.

We saluted the major and his lieutenant, who stood ceremoniously until we were seated and then with many salaams placed themselves on the edge of the packing cases which served them as

extra chairs. This was out of politeness, for there was a lady in our party, and the Turk considers that leaning back in a chair, or crossing the legs, is exceedingly ill-bred. So the major and his lieutenant sat on the edge of their packing cases, and the more polite they were, the nearer the edge did they sit, as far as was compatible with not slipping off.

When we were seated the major clapped his hands, and a depressed-looking warrior, in a faded bluish-green uniform, appeared stealthily from behind the tent and offered us cigarettes with his hand pressed to his heart. He was followed by an equally sad-looking soldier with a glowing coal from a *mangal*, or open charcoal brazier, in a small pair of tongs, with which we lighted our cigarettes; and finally, announced by the grateful smell of boiling coffee, the *kafedji* appeared with steaming cups of coffee on a tray, which he handed to us with the same sadness and ceremony. The cups were cracked, the *zarfs* the commonest produce of the bazaar, and the tray battered, but the coffee was excellent, and, with the ingrained courtesy and hospitality of the Turk, the major and his detachment had placed all they possessed at our disposal.

We smoked the cigarettes and sipped the coffee, and then, the claims of etiquette being

satisfied, we entered into conversation with our hosts. That is to say, the Consul and the lieutenant conversed, for the young officer was an Arab and the Consul spoke that language like a native, whereas the major spoke nothing but Turkish, and had no smattering of any European language. We did our best with signs and smiles, while the Consul and the lieutenant were deep in the state of the roads over which we should have to travel to reach Scutari, or Scodra as it should be called, the state of the country, the food supply and so on, but especially the state of the roads, for the wandering Drin, whose course we were to follow across the wide plain of the Zadrima, meanders where it will, and the boasted road of Ghazi Dervish Pasha, which would have enabled us to get from the sea to Scodra in less than two hours, has never been made.

It was through the medium of the lieutenant that we got at the soul of the major. The major spoke in Turkish to the lieutenant, the lieutenant translated into Arabic for the Consul, and the Consul summarized the conversation in English for the benefit of the rest of us who had no knowledge beyond the tongues of Europe.

"My tent is at their excellencies' disposal," said the major to the lieutenant, but embracing

us all with his sad eyes. "It is my misfortune that I have nothing to offer more worthy of acceptance."

"The Bimbashi has done wonders," said the Consul, who knew San Giovanni di Medua and the fever which haunts it. "With a divan in the shade, and coffee and cigarettes, what can a man wish for more?"

The Bimbashi smiled sadly. "Happily," he said, "I only spend the day in this accursed place; I pass the night at Alessio, and there at least one can sleep. I regret that I must receive their excellencies here, but it is the will of God."

It was evident that the epithets which the Bimbashi applied to San Giovanni di Medua did not penetrate further than the Consul, but whatever they might have been they were well deserved. With a sigh the Bimbashi dismissed San Giovanni di Medua and turned to pleasanter themes.

"When I was in Syria," he said, "I knew some English lords who went there for shooting. They worked very hard at it," added the Bimbashi, who had the primitive idea of sport which consists in filling the bag as soon as possible, at the least expenditure of time, trouble and ammunition, and hurrying home with it to the cook.

"I was in Syria, too, at Damascus," said the Consul, brightening up, but avoiding the subject of sport as opposed to shooting for the pot.

"And his excellency speaks Arabic wonderfully," interjected the lieutenant. But the Bimbashi only smiled deprecatingly, for like most Turks he had never troubled to learn the language of any of the other races of the Ottoman Empire.

Foiled in this direction, the Consul thought of starting on the long and wearisome journey. "The Bimbashi will excuse us if we do not trespass any further on his delightful hospitality, but, as he knows, the road to Scodra is long, and we must reach the city before *aksham*."

The Bimbashi knew this, but again he smiled his sad smile. "Let his excellency not disturb himself," he said; "the day is long and, who knows, the ambulance waggon which the Pasha has sent for her excellency may soon be here."

In consideration of the Consul's *harem*, as the natives put it, being of the party, the Turkish authorities had placed an ambulance waggon at our disposal, but so far there had been no signs of the conveyance. However, no one worried; no one hurried. *Bakalum!* The carriage will arrive in due time, if God wills; if not, what can we do? Doubtless it was too late to do anything but wait,

but the Western mind could not help remembering that if the road across the plain had been finished, not only would the ambulance waggon have reached Medua before that, but we ourselves should have been in it and half-way to Scodra.

There are two parts of Dervish Pasha's road constructed so far, and, as is usual in that part of the world, they are the two parts which are of the least use. The starting-point is at the south end of the bridge of Achmet Pasha at Scodra, and it runs for a mile or two to the village of Bltoja, where it incontinently stops, curiously enough, at the very spot where the Drin begins to make the passage of the Zadrima plain shifty and difficult in all but the driest weather. From Bltoja to the Barbelushi hills a raised causeway would be of supreme utility and would save the city of Scodra from days of isolation by road in the winter, but in spite of occasional spurts of energy the Turkish authorities have studiously ignored the untamed Drin, and when the road is picked up again it is at the foot of the hills opposite Alessio, whence it runs with ostentatious superfluity to the dejected seaport of San Giovanni di Medua.

But Scodra was eight hours' hard riding from San Giovanni di Medua, and the ambulance waggon might take still longer to do the journey, even supposing that it had not got stuck in a

bog-hole on the way down, so at last we decided to wait no longer, but to take advantage of the horses of the *kiradji* who was with the Consular postman, and start off for Alessio on the chance of meeting the waggon. The postman was ready to start and only waiting for us, as his French colleague had gone on, so with much shouting and grunting our belongings were hoisted on to the pack horses, and fastened with cords, one on each side of the pack saddle and a little one on the top. The patient beasts stood still while the operation was going on, though more than once they seemed likely to be shaken off their legs by the energy of the postman, the *kiradji* and his assistants.

At last all was ready, the last package was rescued from the sand, and the procession started off, the postman leading the way mounted on quite a respectable horse, for the animal shared in the reflected glory of the Consulate. Next came the *kiradji* within shouting range of him, for the Albanians converse quite comfortably at a distance, and sitting side-saddle on his animal in the Albanian fashion. Then came the pack horses with our belongings, fastened nose to tail in single file, and lastly the *kiradji's* assistant who urged on the caravan with encouraging shouts which echoed all along the shore. The major, the lieutenant,

the soldiers, the boatmen and ourselves, stood and watched the starting of the procession with great interest and, when all were under way, we said good-bye to our courteous hosts and mounted our own horses.

Sad to relate, none of us took advantage of the beginnings of the road under the hill. The postman, the *kiradji* and the pack horses all wound along the fine, dry sand by the sea, and we followed their example, the major and his men all seeming to think it natural that we should do so. But the Pasha's road was not entirely neglected, for about half-way to Alessio the postman suddenly struck inland to the left, as the bay trended too much to the right, and there were also marshes in the way. The file of horses followed him automatically, and presently we took the road at the foot of the hills, and at last, rounding a final corner, saw Alessio before us on the other side of the river Drin. The little town which, though it stands inland, has lately been dignified with the name of seaport, lies nestling under a hill which is the last offshoot of the Mirdite mountains into the plain of the Zadrima. The major was right. Though it is but a village crouching under an ancient, ruined fortress, it is a thousand times preferable to San Giovanni di Medua. Most of its houses are pretty and well built in the Scutarine

style with gardens surrounded by high walls and full of trees and flowers.

A great man of the place, a Roman Catholic farmer and merchant, was an old friend of the Consul, and he came out to welcome us with good news. The ambulance was really coming, and had passed San Stefni, so, as it was nearly midday and dinner was almost ready, the farmer insisted on our being his guests until the arrival of our waggon. Our host was a stout, round-about little man with a face like a full moon, a stubby moustache and scant hair sticking up on end. He was dressed in his best, which was a mixture of town and country, probably to show that he was a merchant as well as a villager. He wore a Scutarine fez, which is lower and wider than a Turkish fez, and adorned with a heavy blue silk tassel. His waistcoat was of crimson cloth embroidered with black silk, and his coat of the same stuff, with wide, full tails of eighteenth century, Georgian cut, and with huge pockets into which he perpetually stuck his hands. His baggy knickerbockers, which out-knickerbockered the Dutchmen, were also of crimson cloth embroidered with black silk, but instead of the red cloth gaiters and shoes of the Mahometan townsman, which should properly have finished off his get-up, he wore the hideous white cotton stockings and Jemima boots which the Christian

townsmen have borrowed from Europe. As the coping stone to his magnificence he had put on in our honour a broad collar of native cotton lace, which fell over his shoulders and made him look as if he had stepped out of an old picture.

The merchant-farmer was Albanian born and spoke the language as only a native can, but he was obviously not of the true blood. Like many of the Albanians of the border lands, he was of mixed descent, but in his case the mixture was neither Slav nor Greek, but probably Italian. However, he was a most cheery and hospitable little man, and as he spoke Italian with great fluency he seemed like a European in fancy dress after the linguistic difficulties of the Turkish encampment.

His womenkind bustled and dashed about, chattering with excitement, for everything was to be done *alla franca* and not in the native fashion. The guests were actually to sit uncomfortably on chairs round a table, instead of squatting comfortably on a divan, and, wonder of wonders, were going to use the queer knives and forks which the master had brought back from Trieste and was so clever that he knew how to use them. Moreover, a white sheet had been spread upon the table instead of the usual red-and-blue covering of ceremonial occasions, and this made all the

girls giggle more than ever. The farmer's wife and daughters and maid servants were not veiled, firstly because they belonged to a village near the mountains, and secondly because they were Christians, and only the Christian women of the towns went veiled in order to conform to Turkish custom. In the country they followed the Albanian fashion and did not cover their faces, though the girls blushed and turned away whenever they saw a Frank looking at them. They were dressed in heavy cloth skirts of a bright brown bound with red braid, and wore short jackets over their gauze chemises.

The house stood on the slope of the hill looking down to the Drin. It was built of stones from the bed of the river, and its whitewashed walls and low, wide tiled roof made a delightful contrast to the thick green of the trees which surrounded it. The dwelling rooms were on the first floor, for it was built in the Scutarine style, and the feast was laid in the broad balcony, shut in on three sides, and looking out over the river to the sea and the hills along which we had just ridden.

The good wife was superintending in the kitchen with a daughter and a maid to help her, while the rest were looking after the strange table and its stranger appointments. Every now and

then a suppressed giggle came from them, but it gave way to a hushed awe as we all took our seats on the chairs without falling off or upsetting them. We could see the girls, both the two who were in the balcony and those who were peeping round the corners of the door, holding their breath for fear an accident should happen, and marvelling how we could contrive to keep our balance on the chairs, and at the same time perform juggling feats with the dangerous-looking forks which must so complicate the use of the simple and homely knife.

The food at our host's table was simple but plentiful. There were strange fish fried, and mutton roasted and chicken roasted, stuffed egg plants and salads of tomatoes and green stuff, and cheese and fruit of several sorts. For drink there was mild beer in bottles and, better still, native wine from the farmer's own vineyards, which was very like Burgundy in character and on which the old man prided himself not a little. The mistress of the house we did not see after the first greetings until dinner was nearly over, and then she came and joined us in order to prove that she too knew the world, but a suggestion that the daughters should come and sit down was received with bashful consternation which ended in an abrupt flight to the women's quarters. The jovial father

laughed loudly and explained that his daughters were not yet *alla franca*, but that he meant to take them to Trieste next year to show them what the world was really like. At this the mother looked very dubious, but her husband, who was a cheery mortal, cried out that his wife thought they ought not to go till they were married; but he knew that after they were married they would have to do what their husbands told them. His wife looked wise, but said nothing.

"Why, you'd never believe it, Signor Console," went on the husband and father, "these merchants of Scodra go to Venice and Trieste, sometimes every year, and hardly one of them has ever taken his wife with him! I've taken my wife," he added proudly.

"Has the Signora seen Venice?" asked the Consul.

"Si," murmured the good dame, who was rounder and fatter than her husband, but who nevertheless blushed like a girl at talking to a Consul.

"Twice," asserted her husband, with his hands deep in his coat pockets, and with an absurd resemblance to a complacent turkey cock with a blue wattle. "Twice to Trieste. But all husbands are not so good-natured as I am, and when my daughters are married their husbands

might not want to take them." He chuckled wickedly to himself at some reminiscence of a business visit to Trieste with merchants from Scodra. "No, no. If they don't go with me next year they may never go at all, until," he added, dropping his voice and glancing round him cautiously, "until we get *la nostra indipendenza.*"

His wife looked scared, especially as the lumbering of wheels outside told of the coming of the ambulance waggon. Our host got up and examined the road, but as the waggon was at some little distance he resumed his seat and went on with his argument.

"Besides, girls who know how to dress *alla franca* marry well nowadays. Remember Deragyati's daughter who married an Austrian."

Then the mistress of the house made her record speech. "But the other girls *alla franca* did not marry," she burst out; "the men wouldn't have them. They thought them——"

"They were barbarians," interrupted her husband, fearing what was coming, and bowing to the lady of our party, "barbarians. But they will learn, and I will help to teach them."

His wife said nothing. In fact she had a horrible suspicion that she had already said too much.

The Consul rose and shook her warmly by the hand. "A thousand thanks for your gracious hospitality, Signora," he said. "But you will pardon us if we get ready, for the ambulance has arrived, and we must reach the city before *aksham*."

In a moment all was bustle again, but even Consuls could not command expedition in Turkey. The soldiers had to be fed and the horses baited, and it was nearly an hour later before the waggon was loaded up, and we creaked and bumped across the river Drin and rattled slowly along the apology for a road that ran by the side of the river under the Barbelushi hills. Luckily the river was low and the ground dry, and when the six horses broke into a spasmodic trot on the other side, the last we saw of our jovial host was a crimson figure waving an enormous coloured handkerchief from the balcony of his house.

In Europe, when a man speaks of a road he means a more or less levelled surface, metalled and convenient for motor, or at least for horse traffic. In Albania he means a track, or frequently merely a direction, which he must adhere to in order to get from one place to another. Between Alessio and Scodra the whole wide plain of Zadrima may be said to be the road, for the easiest line to be taken depends on the unruly

river Drin and on the state of the crops in the fields near by. This river is a very important factor in Albania, but hitherto it has been an obstacle and not a highway of traffic.

The Black, or South Drin, flows out of the Lake of Ochrida in Middle Albania, and going due north joins the White Drin, which rises in the mountains above Ipek and waters Jacova and Prisrend, just above the Vezir's bridge. Then the united torrents bound the territories of the Mirdites on the north, and break through the mountains near the village of Jubany where Gian Castriot, the father of Scanderbeg, had a castle, only the ruins of which are now visible on the top of the hill. Formerly all the Drin ran south-west to the sea at Alessio, but in modern times part of the river struck out a new course to the north-west and, joining the Kiri just south of Scodra, ran into the Boiana under the bridge of Achmet Pasha.

The old course of the Drin through the plain of the Zadrima is not very formidable in summer when the mountain snows have melted, but in winter it flows all over the plain, and the villages, which are mostly built on low hills, stand out like islands in the flood of waters. Sometimes the plain is impassable for weeks after heavy rains, and the villages can only communicate with one

another by *londra*, the high peaked canoe or boat of the Albanians. The river is always altering its course, and villages which not long ago were within reach of the sea by boat are now left on one side by the stream which, in its erratic wanderings, has caused heavy losses to the farmers of the fertile plain and has turned many of their best fields into swamps.

But meanwhile, until engineers are allowed to take the river in hand and rescue the plain from its eccentricities, travellers have to follow the course which the experience of the Consular postmen shows them is the best. Roughly speaking, the road runs under a low range of hills separated by a marsh from those above San Giovanni di Medua, to Barbelushi, the most important village of the plain, and thence to Bouschatti, the domain of the ancient Albanian Pashas of Scodra, which stands on a low hill rising like an island out of the plain.

At both places the ambulance halted for coffee, it being clearly the opinion of the escort, both officers and men, that it is wise to drink coffee when and where you can, as you never can tell when you will get it again. But for these halts the drive across the plain would have been deadly in its stiffening monotony. The old waggon went bumping, jolting, jingling and rattling over the

inequalities of the road, and even the waste of time caused by stopping to make coffee gave relief to the feeling that the spine was hopelessly shattered and every tooth loosened, which was induced by a mile or two of that real carriage "exercise." The only incident of the journey was the impartial burning of his own and his neighbours' clothes with cigarette ends which the lieutenant in charge of the conveyance, who smoked incessantly, carried on with smiling and unruffled impartiality all along the road.

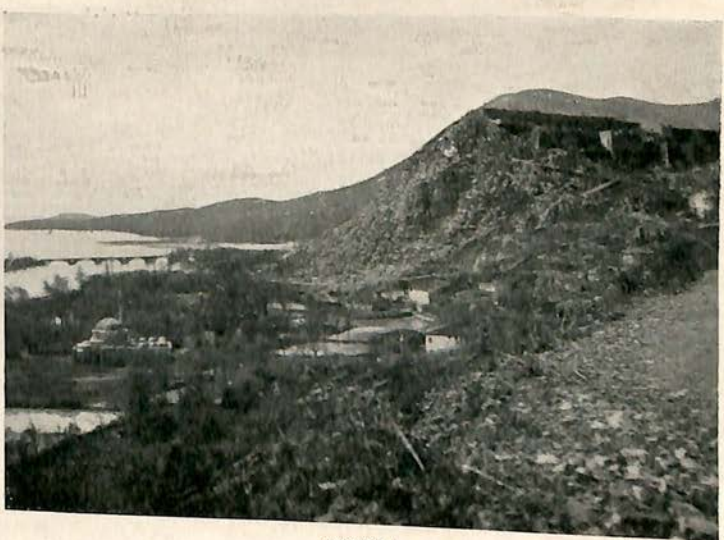
But all things have an end, even a drive in a Turkish ambulance, and at last we reached the low hill above Bltoja, and there we struck the northern end of Dervish Pasha's famous road. It might not have passed the scrutiny of motorists at home, but after five or six hours of the native "roads" it felt like paradise. Shortly afterwards we reached the bridge of Achmet Pasha, which crosses the united Drin and Kiri and joins the suburbs of Baccialek and Tabaki, and incidentally is the entrance to Scodra from the south. The bridge is more picturesque than trustworthy, and though we treated the Custom House authorities with Consular indifference, we all had to get out and cross the structure on foot, for fear that our combined weight might cause the ambulance waggon to plop through the planking into the swirling stream

below. The bridge was built in 1768 by Achmet Pasha of Bouschatti, the Albanian ruler of Scodra, in order, as he said, "to leave to posterity a lasting memorial of his beneficence." Those who have had to cross the Drin at this spot on a raft with a lot of wild Albanians and loose horses, will bless the memory of Achmet Pasha, but the occasional breakdowns of the bridge remind one that 1768 is a long time ago, and that the Turkish doctrine of "*Bakalum*" is an inadequate substitute for regular repairs.

The bridge is a most graceful wooden structure, raised on four wooden piers with wooden arches between them, and a wooden roadway protected by wooden handrails, both of which are fitter for firewood than anything else. The bridge over which every one coming from the Zadrima district must pass, is a most convenient place for settling feuds, and many a man has been shot down as he came out of the trees of Baccialek to the bridge head. Here it was that the Albanian Leaguers lay in wait to shoot Mehemet Ali Pasha had he gone to Scodra instead of going on his fatal mission to Ipek, and looking from the bridge down the course of the Boiana lies Murichan from which the Montenegrins vainly bombarded Mount Tarabosh for many weeks. Tarabosh itself stands on the other side of the river Boiana just in front of us but

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

Ancient bridge at Mesi over the Kiri.



SCODRA.

Achmet Pasha's Bridge, Tabaki and the Castle.

slightly to the left, and right ahead is the Castle hill rising out of the red roofs and olive trees of Tabaki.

As we left the bridge a puff of smoke floated out from the old Venetian battlements of the Castle overhead. It was followed by another, and instantly every Albanian raised his rifle or drew his pistol and sent a bullet whistling into space. Another puff of smoke, and then another and another, following each other round the circle of the battlements, and the rifle and pistol firing redoubled. The country was in a very disturbed state, and we were evidently in the throes of a revolution, to which the rickety ambulance would afford but a poor defence. But no one was unduly disturbed, and the kavass in reply to a query from the Consul, said, "*Bairam*, Signor." That was all. The long month of fasting, Ramazan, during which the true believer will not touch even a drop of coffee or a cigarette from sunrise to sunset, was over at last. The tiny crescent of the new moon had been seen, and the muezzin had chanted the evening call to prayer from the minaret. The Albanian Mahometan, who is a strict believer, has only one way of expressing joy, and that is by firing a bullet into the air regardless of possible accidents.

And so, to the roar of cannon and the banging of rifles and pistols, we made our first entrance into the ancient city of Scodra.

# III

# SCODRA

## THE ALBANIAN CITY WHICH MONTENEGRO COVETS

EVER since October 21st, 1912, when the Montenegrins began to shell Mount Tarabosh, whose fort commands the city, Scodra—or, as it is incorrectly and most confusedly termed, Scutari—has been on every man's tongue. And yet till then few people could have said exactly where it is on the map, and fewer still have visited it. For those who know it, even as passing visitors, it has a remarkable fascination not only for the beauty of its situation and surroundings, but also for the strangeness of its inhabitants, their manners, customs, dress, and above all their restlessness and their blood-feuds. The city lies at the southern end of Lake Scodra, and is the capital of North Albania and one of the most ancient cities of Europe. The date of its foundation is not known, but it claims to have been the capital of the old Illyrian kings about 1000 B.C., and Livy is the

first Latin author who makes mention of it, in his account of the war against the Illyrian pirates, as the stronghold of their rulers in 230 B.C. The city, though for centuries ruled by its native kings and always inhabited by the Thrako-Illyrian tribes who are now represented by the Albanians, passed from time to time under the domination of the Gauls, the Romans, the Byzantine Empire, the Goths, the Bulgarians, the Serbs, the Venetians, and finally of the Turks, who took possession of it in 1477 A.D. For over a hundred years under the Turks it was ruled by its native Scodrali Pashas, and it was only after the Crimean War that it was ruled from Constantinople direct, though the mountains have always been semi-independent.

Every one must sympathize with King Nicolas in his desire to extend the cramped boundaries of his little mountain realm, but no one can approve of his ambition to annex lands which do not belong to the Slavs, and have never been more than temporarily occupied by them in the Middle Ages. In the time of the Czar Dushan, *c.* 1350, the rocks which afterwards came to be known as Montenegro were united with Scodra and its plains, but Montenegro was ruled from Scodra and not Scodra from Montenegro. The little kingdom is historically connected with the principality of Zenta, but the state which is known as Montenegro did

not come into existence until after the defeat of Kossovo in 1389, and Scodra was then, as it has always been in spite of foreign occupations, an Albanian city. King Nicolas has also put in a claim to Scodra on the surprising plea that his ancestors are buried there, but his family originally came from Niegush in the Herzegovina, removing in 1476, when the Turks conquered the duchy, to a new Niegush near Cettigne. The King's ancestors lie buried in the Herzegovina or in Montenegro, and it is in the Herzegovina that Montenegro ought to be allowed to expand, and not in Albania. The Herzegovina is absolutely identical with Montenegro, whereas Scodra is Albanian and peopled by an utterly different race. But the King recognizes that the Herzegovina was lost to him when Austria was requested to administer the provinces after the Treaty of Berlin, and that unless the Dual Monarchy breaks up his extension in the Slav lands of the north is finally blocked. Nevertheless his ambition to revive the Czardom of the Serbs is quite compatible with the existence of an independent Albanian principality.

After entering the city by the bridge of Achmet Pasha we rode along with the broad stream of the Boiana on our left and the steep rock of the Castle on our right, and passed the ruined marble baths of some dead and gone Albanian

Pasha and entered the bazaar of Scodra, through alleys which were very narrow, very crowded, very dirty and very dark. In one place the street was roofed in with trellis-work across from roof to roof, an arrangement which, if it kept off the heat of the sun, at the same time most effectually shut out the light. Emerging from the bazaar, and passing an ancient well on the left, the road ran between the high, white stone walls which hid the houses from view, passed the great Turkish cemetery, the Konak or Government House, the Public Garden, and reached what was known as the quarter of the Consulates on the border of the Christian and Mahometan quarters. Here were grouped most of the Consulates, the houses of the rich Christian merchants, and the hotels which more or less catered for European custom when Scodra was not in a state of siege.

From the broad open place, to the east of which most of the better class Christian houses were built, ran the busy Fuschta Chacto street to the plain of the Kiri and the track to the Great Mountains and Podgorica. In ordinary times it was one of the best places in the city for observing the dresses of the Christians not only of Scodra but also of the mountains round about. It contained several locandas, as distinguished from the Mahometan khans, in which the Christians of the town

congregated towards evening, sipping *raki* and maraschino and discussing the news of the day. At first the strange medley of costumes was very puzzling, but gradually the visitor came to recognize the Latin merchants of the city by their enormous knickerbockers made of some sort of deep purple calico, their double-breasted waistcoats and short Eton jackets made of red cloth embroidered with black silk, their large red fezes with heavy blue silk tassels, and their white cotton stockings. But to this old Venetian dress, which after all was only moderately picturesque, they too often added the abomination of elastic-sided boots with the straps sticking out before and behind. The dress of the few Orthodox Slavs of Scodra was similar to that of the Latins, except that their knickerbockers were of heavy blue cloth, and that they wore low shoes on their feet instead of the horrible boots *alla franca.* But unfortunately these quaint dresses are disappearing every day and the merchants are taking to slop suits from Italy and Trieste, which are nothing but iniquitous burlesques of European costume, and which transform the picturesque-looking Albanian into a "dago" of the most appalling type. What will happen when Scodra is one of the principal cities of the new kingdom and open to visitors and European influences is beyond prophecy.

As the Fuschta Chacto street was the principal thoroughfare from the mountains, the Christian mountaineers from the Montenegrin frontier passed up and down it all day long in times of peace. They were tall, well-made men, most of them, with long fair moustaches, keen eyes, square shoulders and stately carriage, though many of them were tattered, downcast men with careworn looks, on whom hunger and poverty pressed hardly. Still, whether rich or poor, well-dressed or ragged, every man carried his cherished arms, unless the order which obliged the mountaineers to leave their arms at the guard-house on entering the town happened to be in force.

All the mountain tribes of the north and north-east of Scodra wore, with some slight variations, the same dress. The usual costume of the mountaineer was a short, black jacket, with a deep collar ornamented with a fringe; a double-breasted waistcoat of white cloth, embroidered with black silk; trousers of the same material, tight below the knee and in some cases falling over the foot like a gaiter; *opanke*, or raw hide sandals, on the feet, and a little round cloth or cotton cap on the head. In winter long folds of cotton were wound turban-wise round this cap, and were brought over the ears and under the jaws; some tribes wore a sheepskin in very cold

weather, but in summer they discarded coat and waistcoat altogether and wore a loose gauzy shirt instead. No true mountaineer would ever degrade himself by carrying anything. If he was a poor man the women of the family carried the burdens; if he was rich he had a horse. The Christian Albanians could not ride, and took no pride in their horses, but drove to the bazaar the most decrepit and broken-down old animals heavily laden with panniers of country produce.

The women of the three creeds of Scodra wore variations of the same dress. The large, loose Turkish trousers falling over the ankle were made of silk in the case of the Mahometans, of gaily patterned cloth in the case of the Orthodox, and of horribly crackling glazed calico in the case of the Latin Catholics. Their chemises were of the silk gauze of the country, with large hanging sleeves, and over these they wore a little embroidered waistcoat which acted as a corset, and a short jacket of coloured cloth, while round their waists they wound a huge parti-coloured sash. The hair was plastered down at the sides, and cropped short just below the ears, but was suffered to grow long behind and knotted up at the back of the head. Out of doors they enveloped themselves from head to knee in a huge cloak of crimson, blue or scarlet cloth according to their

SCODRA.

An unmarried Roman Catholic girl.

VILLAGE MATRON.

From Vraka, east of the Lake.

religion. The Mahometan and Orthodox women wore a more richly embroidered dress than the Latin Catholics, and in fact no dress more absolutely unbecoming to women has ever been invented than that of the Latin women of Scodra. But in a few years' time it will no doubt have disappeared almost entirely.

The mountaineer women wore neither trousers nor veil, but a short skirt of thick, felt-like cloth reaching to the knee, and a bodice or jacket of the same material, both garments ornamented with red or black braiding. As often as not they went bare-legged and bare-footed, but in cold weather, or when fully dressed, they wore cloth gaiters and shoes. Their hair was generally cropped short and surmounted by the little coin-covered toque of the townswomen. The women of the mountain tribes were sturdy and powerful, and often beautiful as children, but the hard, rough life they led destroyed all their good looks as soon as they arrived at womanhood. In Albania and Montenegro woman was the beast of burden of the poorer families; she did the household drudgery of the hut, and all but the very roughest work in the fields, while her husband or brother sat upon a stone with his rifle between his knees and a cigarette between his lips. When the fruits of the little farm were taken to the bazaar, the

husband stalked ahead, while the old horse limped along behind him with bursting saddle-bags, urged on by the women of the family, whose backs bent double under a towering load of firewood. Arrived at the bazaar the man smoked and drank coffee with his friends and acquaintances, pending the completion of his bargains, and the women sat by the roadside selling their firewood to the passers-by. In the afternoon the procession plodded slowly homeward across the plain, the man as often as not sitting sideways upon the horse, while his womenkind tramped wearily behind him. Of course this sort of thing held only among the mountain tribes whose women were not shut up as the Mahometan women of the towns were. An Albanian, if any of his tribe or kinsfolk were engaged in a blood-feud, went through the mountains with his life in his hand. He might at any moment be shot down without warning for the sins of another man, and hence he always had to walk unencumbered, with his rifle ready and his pistols loose in his girdle. Nominally the blood-feud was abolished under the Turkish rule, but it is not so easy to eradicate ancient customs from primitive minds. The life of a woman was sacred; no man would touch her; and for this reason, and as the goods of the poorer families must be got to market somehow, the woman had to carry them

while the man acted as a sort of police guard. Otherwise women were treated with respect in Albania and had a great deal of influence in the household.

The most interesting of the inhabitants of Scodra were the Mahometan Aghas. They were the aristocracy of the country, but like the rest of the people they had fallen on evil days, and were not always the stately and gorgeous persons of former days. The Mahometans of good family were generally tall and well built, with handsome and intelligent faces, though their education was naturally of the scantiest. In full dress they wore the snowy fustanelle, or kilt, reaching to the knee and made of six or seven hundred gores of white cotton, which swayed backwards and forwards as they walked with an air of intense swagger. The coat and waistcoat were of scarlet cloth richly embroidered with gold and silk. On their heads they wore a flat, red fez with a heavy blue silk tassel, round the waist a broad silk sash half covering the *sila*, or belt, which contained or should contain, the pistols and yataghan, and on their feet Turkish shoes of red leather. The cartridge boxes, which were worn slung from the waist, and the hilts of the pistols and yataghan, were of solid silver beautifully chiselled. Not only did the Christian merchants, who carry on a brisk

trade with Europe, own shops in the bazaar, but also the Mahometan beys and aghas. Every man who respected himself spent the day in the bazaar sitting cross-legged in his own or a friend's shop; and no better way could be imagined of studying life in Scodra than spending the morning in the shop of some man of importance, sipping coffee, smoking cigarettes, and examining pistols, yataghans with carved silver hilts, long guns, inlaid knives, filagree cigarette holders, delicate silk fabrics, and all the other native wrought goods of North Albania brought in for inspection by friends and neighbours. No one advertised or puffed his wares, or pressed the visitor to buy. The artificers and workmen plied the hammer, the chisel or the needle, while the masters exchanged cigarettes and the last piece of news brought in from the coast or the interior. Montenegrins were frequently to be seen in the bazaar buying goods which were not obtainable in their country, and laughing and talking with their friends and connections. In former times many a frontier war was caused by a squabble over a bazaar transaction, for when both parties went about armed it needed but a slight spark to set their latent animosities in a blaze.

Most of the foreign visitors too, and indeed many of the residents in Scodra, never got that

deeper insight into the life of the country which was afforded by an invitation to an Albanian house. The streets in the Mahometan quarter were narrow and paved with large round cobble stones, which made walking rather difficult. Occasionally great stepping stones were placed across the road, for incredible as it seemed in summer, the streets of Scodra were watercourses in the wintertime when the Boiana and the Drin overflowed their low banks, and the Kiri rushed a foaming torrent from the narrow ravines of Drivasto. The houses stood in gardens or courtyards surrounded by high walls, and guarded by huge gateways with massive, iron-studded doors, flanked with narrow apertures through which an enemy attempting to break open the gate could be shot down. In the centre of an Albanian courtyard there was always a well with a curious double-handed pulley for raising the bucket, and the house itself was built of cobble stones from the bed of the Kiri and plastered white, with a tiled roof stretching out beyond the walls in low, wide eaves which afforded shade in summer and protection from the rain in winter. Albanian houses had only one storey, the ground floor being used for stowing provisions and as stabling for the horses and cattle. All the living rooms were on the first floor, and were reached by an open

wooden staircase which gave access to a broad balcony running across the whole front of the house with the doors of the inner rooms opening out of it. When a man entered the women all scuttled off to the *harem* like frightened rabbits, except the mountaineer servants, who looked on with placid indifference as the strangers were ushered into the *selamlik* or reception-room.

The flooring of the principal rooms in a Scodra house was covered with rush matting, which was not brought into the house ready made, but was manufactured in the room and for the room, being worked into every recess and corner by a mountaineer who squatted cross-legged on the floor, with his mouth full of rushes, plaiting rapidly and dexterously. On the matting were spread several brilliantly coloured carpets, and round the walls ran low divans covered with red cloth, the room possessing neither tables nor chairs. There were almost invariably three windows in the thick walls, each one protected by carved wooden bars outside and by heavy shutters inside, looking out on the neglected garden. The fireplace was a curious, ecclesiastically shaped structure, carved in stone and carefully whitewashed, jutting out into the room over a large stone slab on which a huge log fire was lighted upon occasions. This fireplace was a great ornament in an Albanian room, but

was seldom used, as a *mangal*, or flat brazier full of red-hot glowing charcoal was preferred in winter in spite of the poisonous fumes it gives out. The rooms were not very lofty, but the windows never reached to the ceiling, and just above them a broad wooden shelf, carved with many a quaint design, ran round the room, starting from either side of the fireplace. On this shelf were ranged vast metal dishes which held a whole roast lamb on feast days, and perhaps two or three dozen willow-pattern plates brought from Malta, which were looked upon as great treasures. Opposite the fireplace was a deep recess, wood-panelled, containing a noble carved oak chest showing traces of its Venetian origin in the lions' feet that supported it. In this the master of the house kept the treasures of his wardrobe: long scarlet coats with hanging sleeves elaborately worked in black silk, huge knicker-bockers of red cloth similarly ornamented, beautiful shirts of the finest silk gauze with lace collars a foot deep, rolls of silk gauze striped in various colours, purple velvet waistcoats stiff and heavy with gold embroidery, worked gaiters, long silk scarves and sashes glowing with every colour of the rainbow, and all the gorgeous Oriental frippery of an Albanian agha's wardrobe. On the walls hung *pushkas*, or long guns, pistols and yataghans, all splendidly decorated with carved silver ornamentation.

Immediately on entering the guest was presented with cigarettes, and in a few moments a serving man came in with tumblers of some sweet, pink fluid. He then hurried out and returned at once with tiny cups of very hot coffee, the cups handleless and balanced in silver filagree *zarfs* shaped like egg cups. Then a plate of large, white sugar-plums was handed round, followed by more coffee, for Albanian hospitality demanded that the appetite of a guest should never be neglected. As soon as one cigarette showed signs of burning to its end others were brought forward, and the guest could not refuse under penalty of being thought churlish. The coffee and the pink and yellow liquids had to be swallowed somehow, but the hard, white sweetmeats could be discreetly conveyed to the handkerchief, and then shaken out into the roadway when at a safe distance from the house. For the rest an Albanian agha had nothing but his arms and fine dresses to show; no books, no pictures, no sign of intellectual life. On the return from the bazaar or the country every evening supper was cooked; cigarettes and gossip followed, enlivened, perhaps, by some plaintive air thrummed on the two wire strings of an Albanian mandoline; and then, one by one, the family retired to the inner rooms, or rolled themselves upon the broad divans and went to sleep

there. A barren, profitless and, one would think, joyless existence; and yet, in spite of all, the Albanian agha was a courteous and polished gentleman, who exercised his hospitality with the ease and dignity of a man who has spent his life in courts.

The blood-feuds which used to be so common in Scodra and the mountains were gradually dying out, for the authorities and the priests had set their faces against the practice for many years past. But the factors which had the greatest influence in putting down the practice were the poverty from which Albania had suffered for years and the enforcing of the edict against carrying arms in the city. Formerly no Mahometan Albanian ever went outside his house without an arsenal of small arms in his belt, and even the poorest had his pistol or cheap revolver. Only the Christians in the town might not bear arms, but the Christian mountaineers in defiance of edicts always paraded the streets armed to the teeth. But whenever the Turks felt themselves strong enough they enforced the edict, though if ever they wished to arm the people as a threat against Montenegro they withdrew the prohibition, and even armed the Albanians themselves. Before the late war the Turks armed the townsmen against the mountain tribes who were attacking Tusi, and

the cherished pistols and yataghans were brought out again. In the old days Ramazan and Bairam were always the causes of deaths, sometimes as many as twenty or thirty lives being lost over a squabble about nothing at all. When the Mahometan Albanians had been fasting all a long summer's day, and were irritated by seeing Christians looking fat and well fed, fights were of frequent occurrence, and even in ordinary times a bully would pick a quarrel with a Christian for sheer wantonness.

To the casual observer the Albanians seemed to be always rebelling and fighting for no reason whatever. But it must not be forgotten that they were never really conquered by the Turks, and that in their mountains they did very much as they liked. They were faithful to Abdul Hamid because he was on the whole an easy-going task-master, and they were shrewd enough to see that he and the Ottoman Empire were a bulwark between them and some of the European Powers. But the Roman Catholic mountaineers sided with Montenegro when war was declared because of their disgust at the rule of the Young Turks. They were promised those fine sounding words, Liberty and a Constitution, phrases which they interpreted to mean freedom from the control of Constantinople, while the Young Turks read them

as meaning all the tyranny of a modern bureaucracy tempered by the farce of parliamentary institutions. With such contrasting ideals the two parties naturally came into conflict, for the Albanians strongly objected to the regular payment of taxes, the use of the Turkish language in the state schools, and the enforcement of military service in the Asiatic provinces.

But the Turk, the latest intruder in Albania, has now gone from the land, and the city of Scodra will return to the position it occupied nearly three thousand years ago when it was the chief town of the Illyrian tribes under their native kings. Many conquerors have passed over it, but the stubborn race which is now known as Albanian has survived them all. It now only remains for the people of Scodra to justify the trust which Europe has reposed in them as the leaders of the new kingdom, and if doggedness, independence, and the vital force which can live through all vicissitudes of fortune, count for anything in modern Europe, they should not be found wanting.

## IV

### KAVASSES AND SERVANTS

So much for the capital of Albania and its inhabitants in general. Now we will deal with them in greater detail, first of all touching on the life which a European had to lead in that out-of-the-way corner of the world. As yet Scodra has not been modernized like Belgrade and Sofia, and in a far lesser degree, Cettigne. But doubtless that will come, and the old life will pass away to be replaced by a bastard civilization which will form a thin veneer over the true manners and customs of the people, just as it does in the other Balkan capitals.

Most of the streets in Scodra were far from gay; there was no gas and no electricity. The roadway was generally loose and pebbly, for it served the double purpose of a road in dry weather and of a watercourse in the winter when the Kiri overflowed. At intervals, usually in front of some great gateway with massive wooden doors, were rows of boulders which acted as stepping-stones in

the rainy season for those who wished to cross the street. The footpath was a raised causeway, sometimes a couple of feet above the road, in order to avoid the floods. There was no view at all; for on either hand rose high walls of cobble-stones, over which might perhaps be seen the red roofs of the houses they encircled, and the trees which beautified the courtyards and gardens kept so jealously guarded from the public eye.

My own little cottage will perhaps serve as a type of the houses in Scodra. Like the rest it was hidden away behind its high stone walls, and its gateway was a huge and imposing affair like the entrance to a fortress. In front of the house was a bare little courtyard paved with cobble-stones, and containing the well with its curious hand-windlass for drawing up the water. For some reason or other this courtyard was covered in autumn with a luxuriant growth of camomile, which rendered the hot air heavy with a medicinal odour, and made walking difficult except in the paths that got worn through the mass. It never entered into any one's head to uproot this growth; it was there, and we accepted it with resignation. Beyond the courtyard, and separated from it by a slight fence, was the garden. It contained two or three olive trees, half a dozen vines, and a couple of mulberry trees, representing the three staple products of

Scodra—oil, wine and silk. To my own exertions were due the magnificent crop of tomatoes, the green peas, the other vegetables, and the glorious mass of flowers in one corner.

The house itself faced this little domain, and was a small, one-storied cottage built, like the wall and everything else in the city, with cobble-stones from the bed of the Kiri, and plastered white all over. The roof was low, and the eaves projected far over the walls, giving shelter from the burning sun in summer and from the pitiless rain in winter. On the ground-floor was nothing but a servant's room, the rest being a wide open space where wood, charcoal and other stores were kept, and where the Albanians had formerly stabled their horses and cattle. The house was really the half of a larger building, but was cut off from the other part many years ago. The open balcony, which runs along the front of all the houses of Scodra, had been shut in to make a bedroom and an entrance hall; while the ladder, which formerly gave access to the first floor, had been roofed over and turned into a staircase. On this, the only floor, there were besides the entrance hall, two bedrooms, a sitting-room and a kitchen. There was nothing remarkable about the other rooms; but my bedroom, which was in all probability the *harem* when an Albanian family occupied it, was a typical native

room. It was lighted by three small, square windows which were guarded by an ornamental wooden lattice. The windows were about a foot from the ground, and only went half-way up the wall to where a broad shelf of carved wood ran all round the room, and was the general receptacle for every odd and end that could be stowed away nowhere else. Between two of the windows was the fireplace, a curious whitewashed monument resembling a small shrine. The hearthstone was a broad octagonal slab, and was used on grand occasions for burning a whole log of wood at a time, as our ancestors burned the Yule-log. Opposite the fireplace was a deep alcove, panelled with carved wood; and above it was a sort of balcony, to which access was given by a tiny staircase hidden in the wall. This recess once contained the carved oak chest in which an Albanian bride's trousseau is stored, but it served me as a wardrobe for my clothes and as a convenient place for ranging my boots, over which huge rats tumbled and disported themselves all night long.

Next door was the kitchen where, with the most primitive of stoves and two or three tin pots, Simon the cook contrived to elaborate the most excellent dishes. I was proud of my cook, and with reason, for he was about the best cook in Scodra; indeed, on his own showing, he was the

only one. Occasionally he became inflated with pride and got restive, but was quickly brought to reason by the threat of sending to Trieste for a cook. Of course I had no such absurd intention; but Simon was given over to the idea, which is still prevalent in some places abroad, that the Bank of England cellars are full of new sovereigns, and that Englishmen have only got to go and take a few shovelfuls when they want money for any of their mad freaks. With such inexhaustible resources behind me Simon felt that I might even go to the extravagance of sending to Trieste for a cook, and so he subsided among his pots and pans. He had a wife and family somewhere in the town and did not sleep in the house, but disappeared soon after dinner to reappear early the next morning.

Unlike the cook who was a Roman Catholic Albanian, Achmet, my personal servant, was a pure Turk. He was what corresponds to a University graduate in Turkey; but still, though he was a learned man and wrote his intricate language with the greatest ease and neatness, he did not disdain to put his entire energies into my service for the time being. And energies they were. He had none of the traditional gravity of the Turk, and no one had ever yet seen him walk. Correctly attired in a dark suit, and with his fez

sticking straight up on his head, he went about his marketing errands at a gait half shuffle, half trot, his beady little brown eyes glittering, and his umbrella tightly tucked under his arm. Achmet must have been possessed of some little property when he had finished his education, for somehow or other he foolishly became the government's creditor for a considerable sum of money, and, which argued a simple soul, he seems to have expected to be repaid. For a long time the worthy Achmet's importunities were met with fair words; but as he at last became wearisome, he was given an order for his money on the treasury of the vilayet of Scodra, to insure his leaving Constantinople. He arrived almost penniless in Scodra, where the Vali Pasha, who had not been able to pay his troops for months and who did not know where to turn for supplies of food for his men, treated the order on his empty treasury with scant ceremony. Poor Achmet was then at his wits' end; he fell ill from sheer privation, and was taken to the military hospital where, when he grew stronger, he acted as general servant for his daily bread. That was his darkest hour. He had lost everything but a ragged suit of clothes, and the papers that proved the government's indebtedness to him; when one day he heard that the Austrian vice-consul had discharged his servant and was

looking for another. Achmet at once applied for the place, but was so miserable an object, and so ignorant of European ways, that it was with great hesitation the vice-consul allowed him to come for a week or two on trial, as there was no one else to be had. In a month Achmet had become a very different being; his illness, brought on by hunger and despair, had completely left him; he had bought a neat, dark suit of clothes with his first wages, and had become so excellent and trustworthy a servant that his master would not have parted with him under any consideration. When the Austrian left Scodra Achmet came to me, and a more faithful and hard-working servant no man was ever blessed with in the East or elsewhere.

At the Consulate-General the two most imposing and gorgeous personages of the household staff were the *kavasses*, Simon and Marco, both of them, like my cook, Roman Catholic Albanians of the city. The only Christians of Scodra who were allowed to wear the *fustanelle* or full white linen petticoat of the Mahometan Albanians were the *kavasses* of the consulates, and they were intensely proud of the privilege. Simon, the chief *kavass*, was a perfect type of the Shkypetar, to use the name by which the Albanians have always called themselves. He was a tall, lean, muscular man with a hawk-like face,

keen blue eyes and a long fair moustache. On his head he wore the flat crimson fez of the men of Scodra, with its heavy blue silk tassel, and with the royal arms in brass across the front. His jacket, waistcoat and gaiters were of crimson cloth embroidered with gold wire and black silk, and his *fustanelle* was of the finest white linen made with hundreds of gores, which swayed to and fro as he walked with the most invincible swagger. Indeed, when Simon was on duty and preceding his master to call on the Pasha or some other notable, not even the most conceited young Agha could surpass him in the haughtiness of his swagger or in the contemptuousness of the half smile under his bristling moustache. A *kavass* was a very great man, and Simon was thoroughly aware of the fact.

In strong contrast to him was old Marco, who combined the functions of second *kavass* and gardener, and who spent most of the day hoeing away at the hard soil with no protection for his head against the sun but a little white cotton skull-cap. Old Marco was a character in his way, and his appearance was peculiar. He was of short and sturdy build, and not of such a true-bred Shkypetar appearance as Simon. His features were indeterminate, and not only was he short but he had, probably from motives of economy, furnished himself with one of the very shortest of *fustanelles*,

so that he looked like an elderly ballet dancer in unusually scanty skirts. But for him this garment represented all that was gorgeous in the matter of dress; and so, to protect it when he was gardening, or not on duty, he had manufactured out of some old sacks an enormous pair of loose trousers, into which he packed himself and his *fustanelle*.

He was a most good-natured and obliging old man, but his chief drawback was that he spoke no language but his own, and was very dense in understanding what was meant by signs, so that it was exceedingly difficult to communicate with him at all. He was a devout and superstitious Roman Catholic, and literally starved himself all Lent, eating nothing but a little maize bread and drinking nothing but water; but, on the principle of making up for lost time, he gorged himself so piggishly at the feast which was always given to the servants on Easter Day that his much-abused digestion revolted and he appeared on Monday morning a groaning and miserable object. His first petition then was for "Sale Inglese" or Epsom Salts, which were considered a notable remedy by his compatriots, and in the evening he dosed himself recklessly, only to reappear next morning as haggard and ghastly as a galvanized mummy. He groaned and sighed over his work for a day or two, but such was the wonderful constitution of this leathery

old man, that before the week was out he was as hearty and as active as ever.

As a *kavass* Marco was unimpressive, but as a gardener he was without a rival. He and his colleague divided the duties of the *kavasskhana* between them. Simon was ornamental and awe-inspiring; Marco good-natured and laborious.

## V

### THE BOULEVARD DIPLOMATIQUE

In Albania there is no interval of transition between the rainy season and the hot weather. At the end of May the rains abruptly cease, and until the first great thunderstorm in September there is an almost unvarying and blazing heat. But the snow, which remains on the mountain tops until July, every now and then sends a bitter blast down into the plains, which cuts like a knife and causes a good deal of lung trouble among the people. This state of things lasts for about a month, and then follow some ten weeks of sweltering heat in which the middle of the day is sacred to rest and shade, even the hardiest mountaineers not caring to expose themselves to the heat of the sun.

In the summer it was the custom of the European colony to postpone the afternoon walk until the late afternoon when the tall trees began to throw a pleasant shade, and a gentle breeze usually cooled the heated atmosphere. When the wide-eaved houses shadowed the width of the

streets, Scodra gradually roused itself from its afternoon's doze. The day was almost unendurable indoors, even with all the blinds drawn down on the sunny side of the house and with all the windows open, but at last the faint rustling of the leaves outside told that a little breeze had come to cool us, and that the hour for the evening promenade had arrived.

My chief and I descended into the garden, which looked sadly sun-baked and felt like an oven, with every breath of air shut out by the twelve or fourteen feet of cobble walls by which it was surrounded. In the shade outside the *kavasskhana* Simon, the head *kavass*, was squatting on the ground with his eyes half shut, blowing long streams of blue cigarette smoke through his hooked nose. He roused himself sufficiently to rise to his feet as we came down, but the moment our backs were turned relapsed into his former attitude. In the garden wall was a postern gate and, passing through it, we crossed the one plank bridge that spanned the little stream surrounding the house and garden, and entered the public garden. There was always a large colony of ducks feeding by the stream in the late afternoon, and regularly every day our approach sent them quacking and waddling in every direction, giving occasion for some ill-conditioned joker to declare that one could always

tell when the English were coming because of the "canards" which preceded them. Jokes were rare with us, and the little European colony subsisted on this one for more than a year.

The public garden was the invention of the Vali Hussein Husni Pasha, who turned a waste bit of land, where all the old tin pots and general refuse of the quarter were thrown, into a pleasant garden with plenty of shrubs and flowers in the beds, and a kiosk in the centre. Beyond the public garden ran a road up and down which the consuls and vice-consuls and all the aristocracy of the European colony promenaded every day before sunset, and for this reason it was known as the Boulevard Diplomatique or Village Green—a witticism which had a great success before the "canard" joke was invented.

Owing to the disturbed state of the Near East one of the little Balkan kingdoms had a representative among us. His house looked out upon the "Boulevard," and at whatever hour we went into the public garden we could make sure of catching a glimpse of our friend half hidden behind the window curtain, peeping up and down the road to see who was coming or going, and no doubt gathering plenty of material for those voluminous despatches which he wrote to his government every week on the political situation, and read over

SCODRA.

Old house, formerly the British Consulate-General.

SCODRA.

The Public Garden of Hussein Husni Pasha.

SCODRA.

The Bazaar with exit of the Boiana from the Lake.

SCODRA.

The road to the Bazaar by the Konak.

to himself with evident satisfaction and many chuckles. It was well that he had a talent for seeing what was going on all over the Near East from his sitting-room window, for all the summer he was a prisoner in his rooms unless he could attach himself to some valiant European who had no fear of cows. It was far too hot to go out except just before sunset, and at that hour he dared not stir alone, for the cattle were then driven in from their pastures outside the city, and he had a mortal terror of cows. Our appearance in the road was instantly perceived by him, and he quitted his window to place himself under our protection. He was a tall, thin, sallow-faced man, with the beard and walk of a conceited goat, and was carefully dressed for the afternoon promenade in a long, black frock coat tightly buttoned up, and with a pair of kneed trousers falling awkwardly over his broad, flat shoes. Round his throat he wore a little black bow, and on his head a billy-cock hat, very high in the crown and narrow in the brim. He flattered himself that he was a brilliant French scholar, but as he had never been in Frankish Europe his French savoured very much of the back numbers of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. From that periodical he used to copy a paper full of long-winded phrases, which he always carried about in his pocket to be learned for future use in

conversation, when there was no one to talk to and it was too dark to look out of the window. His two topics of conversation were himself and "mon pays," and his ignorance on European matters was of the blandly self-satisfied, not-to-be-convinced order; but for that very reason he was a most entertaining companion, and our constant companion in our afternoon stroll. He was capital fun, for so sublime was his self-consciousness that he always imagined every one to be either looking at or talking of him, and got into agonies if he heard people laugh without knowing what it was they were laughing at. Life would have been distinctly duller in Scodra without him.

Soon we were joined by the chancellier of a Western power, with his gold-laced cap on his head, his eternal cigarette in his mouth and his celebrated dog Fox by his side. The previous autumn Fox had been given up for dead, as a snake bit her on the lip when we were out shooting on the plain. We had some of the natives with us, and after they had killed the snake they looked about for a certain plant without success for some time; and when they did find it poor Fox was stretched out stiff and lifeless. The Albanians said it was too late, but one of them, as he had found the leaf, thought that he might as well use it, so, chewing a little of the plant, he placed it on the wound and

down Fox's throat. We then placed the poor dog under a hedge and covered her with branches of the wait-a-bit thorn. That was on November the twentieth; on the twenty-fourth Fox turned up alive, but very weak and thin, at her master's door. Strangely enough the remedy had not been applied too late, and the dog recovered to become a celebrity.

Her master was a capital fellow and a sportsman, but rather too careless to be a pleasant companion after the birds. If I went first through a gap he scrambled after me with his gun at full cock held loosely under his arm; if I made him go first he trailed the muzzle of his gun behind him, so that I was constantly in expectation of going home in the game-bag. We were out after quail one day, and a bird got up just as we were approaching a road along which a farmer was going to the bazaar with his wife riding astride of an old horse. The little sportsman was too excited to hold his fire, and the report of his gun was followed by a loud yell and the thud of a heavy body falling to the ground. The farmer pointed his rifle threateningly at us, and we rushed forward full of apprehension, for it is a serious matter to put shot into an Albanian; but happily we soon saw that no harm was done. The old horse, being peppered behind with small shot, had flung up its heels and

sent its rider on her back into the mud. The mountaineer burst into roars of unfeeling laughter at seeing his wife plastered with mud, and she rained down maledictions on the horse, her husband and ourselves; but a few piastres soon set everything right, and we continued our sport thankful that we had not to run for our lives before an infuriated tribe of mountaineers.

Our friend's chief was not often seen upon the Boulevard Diplomatique. He was an ill-tempered little man with a hook nose and a heavy moustache, and often profited by the whole of the European colony being on the Boulevard to pay some of his infrequent visits. On returning home one day I found his visiting card sticking out of a crack in my great outer gate. He knew I was out, but would not penetrate into the court-yard for fear I should return and catch him before he could make his escape. Moreover, in the height of summer he always retired into private life for his yearly baths. For more than a month there had not been a cloud in the sky, the earth was parched and cracking, and life was only rendered tolerable to an Englishman by the plentiful use of the cold tub; but for all that he did not consider that the bath should be entered lightly or without proper precautions. We used to lose his society for ten days while he underwent six baths. On his retirement from the

world he took medicine and devoted the first two days to preparing himself for the ceremony. Then for six consecutive days he took a bath, the water being warmed that he might catch no chill, and then he remained indoors for two more days that his system might have time to recover from the shock before he exposed himself to the chance of catching cold under a July sun. The ten days past he used to reappear washed and rejuvenated, and so marvellous was his economy that on those half-dozen baths he managed to look perfectly clean all the year round.

At the eastern extremity of the Boulevard Diplomatique, though he was but seldom seen on that historic walk, lived the consul who watched over the interests of one of the great continental empires. He was an amiable, shy man, whose pasty complexion gave him the appearance of having been parboiled. His official residence was a huge barrack not long erected, about which the consul used to wander like a forlorn ghost. His chief friend and confidant was his dragoman, a worthy native of the town, whose eldest daughter had been educated in Europe. The lonely consul saw this girl who had returned to her cottage home dressed in European costume and speaking French with considerable fluency; but for a long time he kept his thoughts to himself. The poor child

naturally felt rather like a fish out of water when she returned home, for she had become quite accustomed to European ways, while her mother and two sisters still clung to their loose Turkish trousers and oriental habits. The Fairy Prince was at hand. The little consul saw and loved; but the functionaries of the empire were not allowed to contract marriages at random, and without the leave of their imperial master. So the lover wisely kept his own counsel, and sent in a formal application to his chiefs for permission to marry a girl with whom he had hardly exchanged two words in his life. In due time an imposing parchment arrived granting the required indulgence and sealed with an imperial seal of imposing dimensions. The next day the consul placed the precious document and its envelope safely in an inner pocket and set off to pay a visit to his dragoman. The object of his affections was naturally not in the room, so he timidly inquired after her. In the East the head of a house assumes an extremely apologetic attitude towards a guest when speaking of his womenkind, and considers a wife something to be ashamed of, but as his daughter had been educated *alla franca*, the dragoman bowed so far to European customs as to summon her. The consul did not waste words—perhaps he could not trust himself to speak—but he pulled the enclosure from his pocket

and thrust it into the girl's hands, saying simply, "Read it." Speechless with astonishment she opened the document and, stumbling through the preamble, saw to her utter amazement that the emperor granted to his trusty servant the consul permission to marry the lady mentioned in his application. It was perhaps the most original proposal ever imagined.

The consul broke the silence. "I have my august master's permission; what is your answer?" Stammering something about consulting her parents, the girl rushed from the room, and her suitor, picking up his precious paper, took his leave. The rest may be easily imagined; consuls do not grow on wayside hedges. The family's acceptance was quickly notified to the lover, and he, prompt and decided in action, instantly secured the services of the priest. Every obstacle was overcome; the greatest secrecy was observed; and on the Sunday following this unique proposal a little procession left the dragoman's house soon after sunset. First marched the *kavass*, gorgeous in his scarlet uniform, carrying a lantern in his hand, and too philosophical to betray any astonishment at the curious customs of the Franks. Then came the consul in his best black broad-cloth frock-coat and billy-cock hat, with his bride leaning on his arm. Immediately behind the happy pair came the

bride's two sisters in Albanian dresses, shuffling along in their loose slippers and with their full silken trousers rustling with aggressive newness, giggling behind their veils at the double impropriety of being out after dark and of seeing their sister leaning on a man's arm, just like a Frank. The father and mother of the bride, also in full Albanian dress, brought up the rear. The priest was waiting for the party, and the consul was married to his dragoman's daughter before more than half a dozen people in the city knew that there was even an engagement between them.

The next day the fact came out, and the gossip and amazement it excited were things to be remembered. All the principal Christian merchants deeply regretted that their daughters had not been educated *alla franca*, and resolved to rectify the mistake with the least possible delay. These good resolutions soon passed away when the nine days' wonder was over, but the consul remained with an amiable wife and with the satisfaction of having achieved the most unusual proposal and wedding that ever entered the mind of man to conceive.

The other consuls were not men of such startling originality. One of them had a skittle alley in his garden, and once a week throughout the summer consuls-general and pashas, consuls and

beys, vice-consuls and Roman Catholic priests, vied with one another in bowling a heavy ball at the nine skittles at the other end of the alley. It was a capital amusement, as it combined gentle excitement and a certain amount of bodily exercise without the trouble of moving out of the shade of the spreading mulberry tree. At the other end an Albanian gardener fagged for us and trundled back the ball with prodigious energy and never-ceasing grins.

There were other consuls to be met with on the Boulevard, stray engineers from Europe looking for concessions, and perhaps a pasha or two now and again; but *aksham*, or sunset, was the signal for a general dispersal. As the sun sank behind the mountains of Montenegro the Muezzin mounted the little wooden minaret of the mosque opposite the public garden, and proclaimed the hour of prayer in a high-pitched, nasal voice. It soon got dark when once the sun had set, and so with due deliberation the lamplighter began to light the petroleum lamps which the Vali Pasha had placed round the public garden and along the Boulevard Diplomatique. This functionary was a tall and gaunt old Mussulman, with a fierce moustache, an embroidered scarlet jacket and a huge *fustanelle*. He carried a ladder, a box of lucifer matches and an enormous green cotton

umbrella. He planted his ladder against the wooden post on the top of which a common tin lamp was insecurely fastened and, taking off the glass chimney, opened his umbrella to keep off the wind. The handle of the umbrella was tucked under his arm, and then balancing himself on the rickety ladder he proceeded to strike a light with his lucifers, carefully protecting the spluttering flame with both his hands. Naturally this was a slow process, and by the time a dozen lamps were lighted everybody was safe at home, for the citizens did not go out at night, but retired to rest at a very early hour. And it was said by the wits that when the old man had finished lighting the lamps, he solemnly went round again and put them all out in order to save the Pasha's oil.

## VI

### THE VALI PASHA AND HIS STAFF

In England visits of ceremony have now been cut down to such a perfunctory minimum that we no longer take much notice of them, and even very frequently neglect to pay them. But abroad, and especially in the Near East, this slipshod way of conducting social duties is not looked upon with favour, and the man who thinks he can dispense with calls is considered a very ill-mannered person. The first interchange of visits and the state calls on feast days are ceremonies of great importance and have to be conducted according to the rules and regulations. The Protocol is master, and must be obeyed.

When the Vali Pasha wished, or thought it his duty, to pay me a visit he considerately sent round an orderly to say that if it was entirely convenient to me he would do himself the honour to call upon me at such and such an hour, and I replied that I should do myself the honour of receiving his excellency at the hour he had been good enough

to fix. Then I told Achmet what was in store for us, and left the preparations to him. Punctually at the time agreed upon a martial clanking was heard in the street outside, the great double gates were thrown wide open, and the Vali Pasha of the Vilayet stalked into the little courtyard surrounded by his staff. Achmet, with an air at once consequential and deprecatory, bowed in the Vali Pasha and his followers, and then, bustling about the room with his peculiar cat-like tread, placed cigarettes and a clean ash tray by each seat. As the Pasha entered, I stepped forward to greet my guest upon the threshold and led him to the seat of honour, at the same time begging his suite to seat themselves, while the faithful Achmet hurried out to help Simon grind and brew the fresh coffee.

The governor-general, Hussein Husni Pasha, was a tall, thin, grey-haired old gentleman who had seen service in many wars. I say "gentleman" advisedly, for everything about him, from his small and well-kept hands to his shapely and well-shod feet, showed him to be a polished, courteous Turk of the old school. No one could be more courtly in his manner, or more happy and unconventional in the compliments he paid. He spoke no language but his own, not even French, and he was all the better for that ignorance.

Riza Pasha, his second in command, was a very different man. He was tall and stout, and his handsome face had the appearance of belonging to one who was always struggling against sleep and who only kept awake out of politeness to his companions. He spoke English fluently in a soft fat voice, and was a man of some wealth and influence. The third Pasha, Hakki, was completely unlike the other two. He was very short, and had the reputation of being a brave man, nor was he at all loth to blow his own trumpet upon all and every occasion. A distinguishing point about him was that, although he was not remarkable for good looks, he was probably the vainest man in the whole city. He also spoke English with great facility, having spent three years in London learning mining engineering. After mastering this subject he returned to Constantinople, where he was promptly commissioned by the government to translate an English medical work on midwifery into Turkish. Beyond this his English and mining knowledge had done him no good, except that the former had enabled him to prove himself a jovial companion to every Englishman he met.

The other two were interpreters; one of Corfiote extraction, and the other a Dalmatian doctor. Both spoke French, Italian, Turkish and Greek

with equal facility and, what was more, could think in any one of those languages. The Corfiote had no special characteristics except a very heavy moustache and a way of looking stealthily out of the corners of his eyes. The Dalmatian was a fine, tall, handsome man who had attached himself to Hussein Pasha as a sort of unofficial interpreter, and was fond of making a butt of Hakki Pasha upon every safe opportunity.

Almost before the introductory compliments were over the trusty Achmet entered and, with his hand upon his heart, presented a tray bearing the cups of fragrant coffee. We all six laid aside our cigarettes for a moment and sipped the steaming liquor out of the tiny cups, and under the influence of the coffee the first stiffness of our intercourse wore off, so much so that the doctor begged the Vali to tell Hakki Pasha to show me how they preached sermons in England. Hakki looked somewhat disconcerted at this ill-natured suggestion, and the Vali was too much of a gentleman to ask him; but the doctor, who had no such scruples, told me in French—translating into Turkish for the Vali's benefit as he went along—that Hakki Pasha sometimes at the Konak got upon a chair and preached a sermon he once heard in England. It condemned all Turks, Jews, infidels and heretics to everlasting punishment, and the point of the story

of course was the absurdity of placing Turks and infidels in the same category. The doctor was a Christian of some nondescript kind himself, but in Mussulman society was more Turkish than the Turks. The Vali hastened to turn the conversation and said: "Tell the English bey, Hakki Pasha, how they gave you sugar in England!"

Hakki's little eyes lighted up with the spirit of fun, and he began at once, screwing up his caricature of a face and acting every part of his recital; while the Vali Pasha, who had heard the story a hundred times before, followed it in the unknown tongue and nodded approval at the right places which were vividly indicated by the narrator's wonderful gestures.

"When I was in England learning engineering," said Hakki Pasha, "I was in a boarding house near the school, and the landlady was very mean with the sugar. You know that we in the East like a good deal of sweet, and so, when she sent me my cup of tea with only two lumps of sugar in it, I used to send it back and ask for more. Then she would search out the smallest lump of sugar in the basin and hold it out to me between her finger and thumb"—suiting the action to the word, and looking with head on one side and screwed-up eyes at his finger and thumb which he

pinched together as tightly as possible ...ate the very smallest piece of sugar—"she used to hold it like that and say, 'Is that too much for you, Hakki Bey?'"

Then, as he reached the cream of the joke, we all laughed, not loudly or uproariously, but in a dignified and subdued manner, as people who have heard the story before and hope to hear it again, and the little Pasha said, "That is how they give you sugar in England!"

Since exchanging compliments with me on entering, Riza Pasha had not uttered a word, and even after the story he only smiled sadly and continued an admiring inspection of his varnished boots between the slow puffs at his cigarette. The Corfiote, after some conversation with his chief, informed me that the Vali had lately procured some wonderful fishing tackle from England and was anxious to try it. He knew that all Englishmen catch fish, and so begged the favour of my company upon his fishing expedition. He enlarged upon the excellence of his new tackle, till at last Hakki Pasha, not to be outdone, said: "I often catch fish, but my way is quicker, and catches more fish, than his Excellency's," at the same time pulling two or three little cartridges out of his capacious coat pocket.

"What is that, *effendim?*" said the Corfiote.

[illegible] dynamite," replied Hakki cheerfully, slipping the cartridges back into his pocket. "I catch plenty of fish with them."

I fancy that we three non-Moslems felt very uncomfortable. I should not have been so amused at that sugar story if I had known that the little poacher had dynamite cartridges shaking about in his great pockets, and that he murdered fish in so unsportsmanlike a manner. Moreover, he had already burned two holes in his coat sleeve and made a horrible odour by smoking his cigarette so short that it singed his moustache; and there was no knowing what the next burning stump might set fire to. However, no one stirred. If it was written in the Book of Fate that we were to be destroyed that day or the next, it was useless our attempting to prevent it. I could see that the two interpreters did not like the dynamite any more than I did, but they said nothing, knowing that any remark would probably make the Pasha do something foolish out of bravado. So I was not sorry when the Vali rose to take leave; and as I accompanied him to the door he pressed me to come on a fishing expedition in the course of the week. I accepted with the mental reservation to keep as far from Hakki Pasha and his malpractices as possible. The Turkish soldiers, who had been chatting, smoking and drinking coffee with

Achmet down below, sprang to attention, and so, with many parting expressions of friendship, the Pasha and his suite clanked out of my little courtyard.

# VII

## THE ROMAN CATHOLICS OF SCODRA

THE majority of the inhabitants of Scodra are Moslem Albanians, the Christians being less than half of the population. The Christians are nearly all Roman Catholics, and the few Orthodox families are of Slav origin, having come from Montenegro or the Herzegovina and settled in the city. The Christians are now much more important than they were, for they are the principal merchants of Scodra and have acquired wealth by trading with Austria and Italy. They are gradually adopting European ways and, when they are met with in Trieste or Venice, seldom wear their native dress, and are not to be distinguished in any way from the other Near Eastern nationalities which crowd the markets of those cities.

The late war and the constitution of the new Albanian State will, of course, change everything, and in the next few years Europe will come a century nearer to Albania. The Oriental and

mediæval attitude of the townsmen will gradually disappear, and everything and everybody will become Europeanised. Under Turkish rule it was very difficult for a Frank to know or mix with the leading members of the community on anything like terms of intimacy, and the best time to see something of the native life of the Christians of the city was at the two great feasts of Easter and the New Year. Then every one exchanged visits of ceremony, and all the leading merchants paid solemn visits to the consuls and foreigners with whom they were on friendly terms, and also among themselves. The men alone came, for the shadow of the *harem* was upon even the Christian women, and the very idea of going to pay a visit with their husbands seemed grossly improper to them. Of course the women paid visits among themselves, and sometimes went to a European's house to pay a visit to his wife or daughters, but they went more or less surreptitiously and made a great point of not meeting any men and of not being received in the public rooms.

On rising every one put on his best clothes; not his uniform, for the business was not so official as all that, but the half-way of a black coat. Breakfast was often interrupted by the announcement of visitors. The native merchants usually arrived early, partly in order to avoid the European

world, and partly because they had so many of their relatives and friends to call on and drink coffee with. So, soon after nine o'clock, they used to climb the staircase leading to the *selamlik*, and one had to be thoroughly awake, for unless the host had plenty to say the conversation languished, as Oriental manners prevailed among the mercantile community. By lunch time most of the native contingent, who felt it incumbent on them to call, had passed through the little sitting-room, each man having coffee, cigarettes and sweetmeats offered to him, and I as host having to smoke and drink with each one. Hitherto the callers had come in batches, the majority in native Scutarine dress, but a few of the more emancipated in European reach-me-downs. But just before luncheon there came a youth who was a curious symptom of the fluctuating opinions held by the Roman Catholic townsmen.

The approach of noon had brought about a cessation of callers, and with door and windows open I was ridding the room of the heavy clouds of tobacco smoke which hung about it, when another caller was announced. I heard him stumbling up the outer staircase, and then Achmet opened the door and showed in the son of one of the principal Christian merchants who had visited me that morning. At first I hardly recognised

the youth, he seemed so utterly changed, and, what was rather unusual on his part, looked ashamed of himself. A couple of months previously he had returned from Venice, where he had put a final polish on his education, determined to comport himself in everything like a European. He then wore a short cutaway coat, trousers very tight in the leg and very loose round the ankle, a shirt collar cut half-way down his chest, and a billy-cock hat with a very narrow brim on the top of his bushy curls. He was more European than the Europeans in those early days, and spoke of his compatriots as *questa gente*, and affected the airs and graces of the modern Italian youth. But the ridicule of his friends and relations had changed all that, and he presented himself before me in a short scarlet jacket embroidered with black silk and so tight in the arms and back that he could hardly stoop. An enormous pair of dark calico knickerbockers covered his form from the waist to the knee, while his legs and feet were clothed in white cotton stockings and elastic-sided boots. On his head was balanced the flat red fez with its heavy blue silk tassel; in fact, he had taken advantage of the Easter festivities to discard the Frankish dress he once held so dear. He noticed my ill-concealed look of astonishment, and excused himself somewhat awkwardly for resuming the national dress, by no means making

the matter better by saying that he did not come with his father that morning because we, who had lived in Europe, did not care for such early visits, and he thought that we could converse more freely without the presence of *questa gente*. He made these remarks, proving his superiority to the rest of his race in good Italian, and, as a still further proof, after a few false starts continued his remarks in French.

I had noticed when he entered that he seemed to be walking as if he had peas in his boots, and he presently volunteered an explanation of this unfestival-like state of things by observing, "Je ne puis pas chaminer beaucoup, mes bottes sont trop strettes." He smiled feebly as he confessed to his vanity, and wiped his hands nervously with a red cotton handkerchief after the manner of his kind. The conversation languished while he was composing a fresh atrocity in French, and I was almost in despair of getting rid of him when happily some laggard callers arrived. They were personal friends of his, and could not conceal their grins at seeing him again in the native dress which he had professed to despise so vehemently only a week or two ago. As they were in a Frank's house they said nothing, but my pseudo-Frankish acquaintance started to his feet forgetful of the tightness of his boots, and crushing his half-smoked cigarette—the fourth or

fifth—into the brazen ashpan, declared that he must be off as he had so many calls to pay. And when the last callers departed never was luncheon better earned, and never was luncheon more distasteful than after more than three hours of eternal coffee and cigarettes.

The afternoon usually resolved itself into a round of return visits to the native merchants and minor officials. The mercantile community divided itself into two classes: the conservatives, who were satisfied with what their fathers had provided, a wide low house in a garden behind high walls; and the go-aheads, who had built themselves staring white villas in an imitation Italian style, with a drawing-room on the ground floor and papered walls with none of the old carved woodwork of the native houses. But the rooms, if like a barrack, were *alla franca*, and that was enough to prove the owner to be a man above his fellows. The married consuls often took their wives with them on these occasions, because it was the greatest compliment that could be paid to a native household to treat it *alla franca* and not *alla turca*, as the visit of the consul alone would imply. For the merchant's wife it was a great day. Perhaps both she and her husband would be in European dress, as they were safe behind their own walls, both looking and feeling very awkward, and she

especially in constant dread that something had been put on wrong and might come to grief. In the old-fashioned houses both the husband and the wife wore their full trousers and short jackets, and the wife always held a handkerchief folded flat with which she incessantly rubbed her hands in the hope, no doubt, of hiding her nervousness. For the rest, she was unveiled and dressed in her best, with new, crackly Turkish trousers, beautiful gauze vest, a jacket embroidered with black silk, and Frankish boots worked with white thread, an ornamentation which rather spoiled the rest of her appearance. The husband's dress was very similar, except that his baggy knickerbockers only reached to the knee, while the wife's Turkish trousers hung round her ankles.

In every household the ceremony was the same. If there were any natives calling when the consular party arrived they almost invariably took their leave at once. The new-comers were then conducted to the seat of honour, and immediately a servant, or, if great respect were intended, a daughter of the house, brought in the cigarettes, which were followed by coffee in little cups balanced on silver filagree *zarfs*. These *zarfs* were like egg cups in shape, and were very necessary, since Turkish coffee cups have no handles and the coffee should be boiling. After the coffee came pink,

green and yellow syrups in tumblers, the mixture sickeningly sweet, and then more coffee and more cigarettes and huge lumps of sweetmeat, white and cloying to the palate. These Albanian sweetmeats were intensely sticky, and needed careful handling, or the stranger might find himself in an awkward predicament. An Austrian sea captain, who was paying a visit to an Albanian household, once put a whole one in his mouth, and, finding that it obstructed his speech, tried to bite it in two. The result was that his jaws stuck together, and he was rendered speechless and helpless for at least five minutes before he could get free. Happily the visits were not very long, for the conversation was naturally limited, and consisted chiefly in inquiries after the health of the families. Etiquette only demanded that the coffee and syrup should be tasted, and the cigarette, after a couple of whiffs, was usually allowed to smoulder itself out at the edge of the brass ashpan.

But the visits had to be paid, and the coffee, syrup, sweets and cigarettes had to be taken, so when there were ten or a dozen calls to be paid in the course of the day, the state of the Frankish digestion at the end of it may easily be guessed. But with tact and knowledge the visits could generally be got through in an afternoon, and that nearly exhausted the community, for it was not

necessary for a consul to call on the smaller fry. In fact it is quite possible that the native merchants divided themselves into two classes, those who were called upon by the consuls and those who were not. But that is a secret which has never been divulged to Europeans.

# VIII

## THE COMMODORE AND HIS FLEET

ALTHOUGH Lake Scodra is a huge volume of water lying among the mountains of Montenegro and the mountains and plains of North Albania, it has never been the scene of any naval battle. Still the Porte, at any rate for nearly forty years, always kept a fleet of sorts on the lake, under the command of a commodore who, unless he had some interests beyond his squadron, must have been bored to death. Happily for himself the worthy officer who was in command when I first went to Scodra was an enthusiastic gardener as well as a sailor. He lived on shore in a tiny cottage just by the *konak*, and made his little garden, which was about the size of a pocket-handkerchief, as trim and tidy as the deck of a ship, indeed far trimmer and tidier than the decks of his men-of-war.

Scodra is twenty miles from the sea, and the river Boiana is too shallow to be navigable except in the very rainy season, but for all that, somehow or other the Turks managed to coax an imposing

fleet of threepenny steamboats over the rapids and shallows of the river when it was swollen with the autumn rains. It may be that the vessels did some service, but the commodore was not a talkative man, and preferred his flowers to his ships. When the pelting rains left off and the sun made the young plants grow with marvellous rapidity, I made a point of going to see the commodore, as he was then in his very happiest mood. I went with a travelling Englishman, and as Achmet was engaged about the house we took my friend's servant to precede us through the streets to the *casa di vaporji* (the steamboat man's house).

This man deserves a line or two to himself, as he was a type of the lower class Christian of the town. As he stalked proudly in front of us with a couple of brass-handled pistols stuck in his belt, he was a very stately and warlike looking person, but a few weeks ago he had been an altogether different object. In his childhood he played about the narrow streets of the Christian quarter, dressed in a thin cotton shirt in summer and wrapped in a bit of blanket in winter, and most probably learned to smoke when he was about seven years old. As he grew up he spent his days hanging about the courtyard of some merchant or rich man, turning his hand to all sorts of odd jobs when he could not get his piece of maize bread without exertion, and

at night sleeping under the lee of a wall or in an outhouse. In spite of having no visible means of subsistence he always had some tobacco to twist into a cigarette, and possessed a rusty old flint-lock pistol for use on grand occasions. In one of the many times of disturbance, when there was consequently some relaxation of authority, he and some kindred spirits took to foraging expeditions on their own account and, coming into collision with the *zaptiehs*, got thrown into prison. When a man gets into prison in Turkey he generally stays there, unless he has a great deal of money or luck, and Giorgio proved no exception to the rule. In his case luck opened the doors of his prison after he had had a pretty lengthy experience of durance vile.

His old mother, who led the same sort of hand-to-mouth existence as himself, was fortunate enough to get the rough washing and cleaning up to do at one of the European consulates, and after some months summoned up courage to petition the consul's wife to beg the consul to ask the Pasha to let her son out of prison. The consul, being good-natured, promised to look into the matter, and learning that Giorgio had committed no crime but had been incarcerated chiefly on suspicion, one day put the case before the Vali, with the result that the Pasha, who was of course utterly ignorant of

the whole affair, immediately set master Giorgio free. When he came out he was a lank, lean, and hungry-looking object, clothed simply in a shirt and trousers of the thinnest cotton, and with a felt skull-cap on his head. For some weeks he almost regretted his liberty, and was inclined to repent of his mother's influence with those in power; but at last luck befriended him again, and he was engaged as servant by an English traveller. He at once discarded the old shirt and trousers, and assumed the mountaineer dress of white felt embroidered with black silk. He no longer slunk about like a famished wolf, but proud of being in the service of a Frank, and certain that a good supper awaited him after *aksham*, preceded us with head erect and all the stately swagger of his race.

The *casa di vaporji* stood between the back entrance to the *konak* and the beginning of the Boulevard Diplomatique. A stream separated the road from the garden wall, and crossing the single rough plank that served as a bridge, Giorgio knocked loudly at the great gates. Presently a voice within inquired who we were, and on Giorgio replying proudly "*Ingliz milordo*" the gates were thrown open and we entered. The commodore, or *vaporji*, as he was usually called, rose at our entry from the garden couch upon which he had been watching the watering of his beloved

flowers, and we sat down, one on each side of our host. A sailor instantly provided us with cigarettes and brass ashpans, and then, with his hand on his heart, proffered us a red-hot coal in a little pair of tongs instead of matches. We interchanged compliments, and then sat silently inhaling the fragrant tobacco, and looking at the four sailors who were watering the flowers under our host's directions. The garden was a tiny square patch of ground wedged in between the high white walls of the neighbouring houses, with the commodore's little cottage opening into it. The entire available space was cut up into beds by straight paths about eighteen inches wide, which were scrupulously weeded and laid down with powdered shells. Every bed had its flowers planted in mathematically straight lines, and it was easy to see that tulips were the commodore's favourites. But no plant was allowed to take up more room than another, and the whole place, trim and neat, with every square inch put to its fullest use, showed incontestably that the sailor's tidiness did not forsake him when on shore.

The cottage was full of sailors, for the commodore naturally did not go to the expense of keeping a servant when he had all the men of the fleet on Lake Scodra under his command. Another bluejacket brought us coffee, and then we followed our

host in Indian file along the narrow white paths to inspect the beauties of nature and art more closely. The commodore was a stout man in a baggy uniform that fitted him like a sack, and as he wound along the tiny paths he reminded one irresistibly of a tight-rope dancer. However, he steered his way with marvellous skill, never kicking a single shell on to the flower beds, and explaining to us as he went that the garden would look much better in another week, showing us where some of his choicest specimens had been planted but had not yet shown above ground, and pointing out the buds that lay concealed among the green shoots of others which had come up—and all with the simplicity of a child and with the grave interest that only a real lover of flowers, who is also a Turk or Dutchman, could exhibit.

After the inspection of the garden we resumed our seats and more coffee was brought to us. The conversation turned upon naval matters, which the commodore was quite willing to discuss; though hardly with the quiet enthusiasm with which he discoursed on his flowers. He told us that before coming to North Albania he had been in command of a gunboat in the Black Sea. We could not discover that he had ever done anything in particular or fought any actions, but as he seemed to have kept his boat out of harm's way and

not to have wantonly exposed any of the Sultan's men or ships, he was doubtless marked out for promotion. The flotilla on the lake originally consisted of three boats, but one was somewhere at the bottom of the Boiana, and so the two survivors were judiciously kept in the lake in case they should also come to grief if they again attempted to pass the shallows and rapids of the river. Then the commodore asked us if we should like to go over the fleet, and we accepted with pleasure; so, after the final directions had been given to the four gardening sailors, we set off in procession for the bazaar and the outlet of the river Boiana. Giorgio went first, perhaps with a prouder air than usual; next came the commodore sandwiched between our two selves, while the rear was brought up by two sailors. In this order, and at a grave and solemn pace, we proceeded through the streets, past the great burial ground where Ali Haidar Pasha lies buried, and, turning aside by the well without entering the bazaar, crossed the fields to a spot known as the Twelve Trees. There were only four trees left to stretch their tall branches towards the cloudless sky, and a melancholy story attached to them. Standing alone on the bank of the river they had always been a mark for the thunderstorms which are such constant visitors to Scodra, and gradually their number had been

reduced. A few years before a shepherd and his sheep, crouching under their shelter from the pelting storm, had been struck by lightning and all killed, and the scarred trunk of one of the trees still standing served as a grim reminder of the reason why there were no longer twelve trees.

A great deal of shouting from the two sailors who accompanied us brought a man-of-war's boat to carry us across to the steamers. We entered the boat, Giorgio and the two sailors remaining on shore. The commodore took the tiller, and the lithe and active crew from the Black Sea coast took us rapidly towards the lake. And it was as well that they did so, for before we had gone very far we discovered that the water was unpleasantly high in the bottom of the boat. The commodore explained that our craft was one of two boats which had recently been sent from Constantinople, that they had been left for some time on the shore at the mouth of the Boiana before being brought up the river, and that consequently some of the seams had started. He trusted resignedly that they would close when the boat had been in the water a little while, and meanwhile counselled us to put our feet up on the thwart in front of us. The little brown sailors were dressed much as sailors usually are, except that they wore the fez which has become almost the only distinguishing part of

many Turks' dress, for their loose trousers, and shirt with the full, wide collar of dark blue cotton might have been worn by the mariners of any power. In a few minutes' time we bumped against the side of the flagship, and mounted the broad and commodious ladder which hung over the side. Both the commodore and his second in command were stout and dignified, and had no intention of scrambling up the side even of a penny steamer in any but the very easiest fashion.

The captain having seen us on the shore had made preparations in our honour by girding on his sword and buttoning up the front of his uniform all awry. He salaamed courteously, and the bright blades of four sailors drawn up in line flashed in the sunshine as they saluted the commodore and ourselves. Instantly four rush-bottomed chairs were thrust up the hatchway by an unseen hand, and we took our seats in a circle, while cigarettes and coffee were handed round—a ceremony which it would be a most terrible breach of etiquette to omit. This done we strolled round the ship, a duty very quickly finished. The vessel carried two guns, one a little brass popgun in the bows used for firing salutes, and the other a long Krupp gun in the stern, which would in all probability have shaken the old tub to pieces had it been fired. In

NEAR LAKE SCODRA.

Gipsies passing through a small town.

NEAR LAKE SCODRA.

Montenegrins passing through a small town.

the cabin below a dozen Martini-Peabody rifles and as many cutlasses, all well kept and brightly polished, were arranged in a stand and constituted the armament of the ship's company.

As for the vessels themselves, they were built in Glasgow many years ago, and after doing good service on the Clyde were bought by the Turkish government and transferred to the Bosphorus. There they ran to and fro for fifteen years until at last the Porte conceived the brilliant idea of turning them into men-of-war and sending them to Lake Scodra to overawe Montenegro. On the wheel were recorded the builder's name and the date. Poor old boats; they were not very effective in overawing, but they still did the journey to and fro across the lake, especially when any distinguished personage wished to go from Scodra to Montenegro, and there were times when they transported families of ragged refugees into the already poverty-harassed city of Scodra.

The commodore evidently took a sort of pride in his command, though he admitted that he could get no great speed out of his ships. Pressed on this point he confessed that he did not know their rate of speed, but that it took several hours to steam to Lissendra at the far end of the lake. "No, there is no coal. That is a great drawback. Sometimes a ship brings coal and leaves some at Medua

for the squadron, but there has been none for some time past." The vessels therefore had to burn wood, and when they crossed the lake the whole deck was cumbered with firewood, so that at first there was hardly room to move, but the furnaces burned such a quantity that the pile was soon diminished.

The captain told us with considerable satisfaction that he could speak English, but as he made this avowal in Turkish we were naturally rather sceptical until it slowly dawned upon us that the queer sounds with which he followed up his assertion were English words of command—"Easer, stopper, bakker, turnerastern, goaed." The captain reeled off the phrases in a low voice without a pause or inflection, looking very like a sheepish schoolboy repeating a French lesson. He also gave us the English names for parts for the engine and gear, for the Turks have adopted the English terms for machinery and the like, and the Turkish language even boasts such a verb as *Trnrstrn-etmk*, which means "to turn her astern."

But the sun was drawing near Mount Rumia, and if we wished to be home before *aksham* we had to leave at once. So, as the commodore expressed his intention of remaining on board for some time longer, we took our leave of him and the captain, and once more entrusted ourselves to the leaky

boat. On shore Giorgio received us, evidently rather bored by his long wait, and after giving a present to the boat's crew we joined the crowd of merchants going home from the bazaar, and reached the house just as the muezzin was mounting the rickety wooden minaret of the mosque near my door and preparing to summon the Faithful to the evening prayer.

# IX

## THE MALISSORI CHIEF

He was a man of about five feet ten in height, with broad shoulders and lean flanks, straight as a dart, and firmly set on his legs. He looked a mass of steel and whipcord, and any one who had tried conclusions with him in a rough and tumble fight would have judged such a description rather an under-statement of the case.

It was evidently a gala day with him, for he was dressed in all his best and newest. His trousers were tight and close-fitting, made of white felt embroidered with black silk. Round the calves and ankles they were moulded to his legs, but over the foot they spread out something like spats. His waistcoat was also of white felt embroidered with black silk, double breasted and adorned with full sleeves beneath which, and at his throat, showed the gauze of his shirt, a garment which he did not usually wear but which he had put on in honour of the occasion.

On his left breast hung three silver medals, two

of which showed that he had served the Padishah in the last war, and the third was an English Crimean medal which he had inherited from his father. In his red *sila*, or pouch-belt, were thrust a couple of gold-inlaid flint-lock pistols from Prisrend, and a splendid silver-hilted yataghan with a Damascus blade, arms which he valued more than his life. Over his shoulders he wore a short, sleeveless, black felt jacket, and on his head a white felt skull cap, round which was wound a gauze scarf or turban with the ends coming under the chin and falling over the back. On his feet were raw hide sandals over thick white socks, an unusual thing for him to wear, which marked that he was going to some ceremony where it would be etiquette to remove the shoes. His face and hands were like leather, in his ears he wore silver-gilt rings, and on the little finger of his right hand the heavy silver ring of the mountain dandy. His moustache was long and bristling, brushed away from tight-set lips; his nose was aquiline and well shaped, and his eyes dark and piercing under his heavy brows. He stalked with a leisurely stride, like a king among men, his right hand resting on the carved silver hilt of his yataghan, and his quick hawk-like eyes turning to right and left as he went, in search of a possible enemy. In spite of his fierce appearance he was a Christian, and

according to his lights a fervent Catholic, for he was Nik Leka, a chief among the Skreli, a tribe of the Malissori of the North Albanian mountains.

Presently this proud and magnificent personage turned across a little bridge that spanned a stream by the roadside, and strode up to the huge gateway of the Consulate-General, upon which he knocked as one who has a right to demand entry. A guttural voice hurled a question through the solid oak, and he replied with such dignity that the broad portals were at once thrown open by Simon, the *kavass*, in *fustanelle*, scarlet jacket and a belt full of pistols, who grunted a welcome to him, to which he responded with an equally benevolent growl. Then, as he was on a mission of peace, he turned into the *kavasshana* almost with an air of proprietorship, and handed over his weapons to the occupant, much in the same way as a rich Frank deposits his wife's diamonds with his banker. But in Albania pistols are more valuable than diamonds, for on them life may depend from one moment to another. Then he gave a shake to his waistcoat, now disencumbered of its burden, and mounted the broad flight of stone stairs leading to the old, deep-eaved house.

At the top of the steps stood the consul-general, brought out by the clatter of his visitor's

arrival, and welcomed him with outstretched hand, which Nik Leka shook rather bashfully after hurriedly giving the Turkish salutation. Then it became evident that the chief was nervous, he who would have faced a Turkish regiment without blenching. He shuffled off his sandals, and stood hesitating in his coarse white socks. But the consul-general seized him by the hand, and, talking reassuringly as one would to a child, led him, walking slightly in advance, across the hall to the inner room which had once been the *harem* of the old house and was now the dining-room of the Consulate-General. Then the reason of the chief's slight nervousness became apparent. In the dining-room were assembled the rest of the family and, appalling to contemplate, the ladies. Nik Leka had been of some service to the consul-general and, as it was impossible to offer him money, he had been invited to luncheon *alla franca*.

When he entered the presence of the Frankish ladies he absolutely refused to sit down, but remained standing, flashing his eyes a trifle shamefacedly at the consul-general's wife and daughter, and salaaming with a simple dignity which no courtier could have surpassed. To Nik Leka his womenfolk acted as servants; they waited upon him at all times, and when he ate they stood humbly by until he had finished before they

ventured to take the dish aside and eat among themselves. He had been told that the Franks allowed their women to eat with them, and even with other men, but he had hardly believed this to be true, so for fear of transgressing he stood quite still and salaamed again, giving a greeting in guttural Albanian. He did not feel abashed at the ladies being unveiled, because mountaineer women never hide their faces and, except that they are as servants in the house, are treated with the greatest respect. Happily the tension was relieved by the arrival of dinner, brought in by Noce, the body servant, who was an Albanian townsman, and who could hardly stifle his grins at the thought of a mountaineer eating *alla franca* in the master's *harem*. But he discreetly subdued his grins, for Nik Leka had sharp eyes, and a long brass ramrod in his belt downstairs, and it might be that he would remember in the future on a country-road any intempestive mirth on Noce's part.

The chief was given the place of honour at the hostess' right hand, and with evident misgivings entrusted himself to a chair, and forbore the attempt to curl his legs up under him, which he was sharp enough to see would certainly entail disaster. Out of the corner of his keen eyes he watched to see how his hosts acted with the strange objects in front of him. At every moment

there was something new: a napkin, a multiplicity of knives, spoons and forks, plates, and a table covered with strange and outlandish utensils, even flowers, such as no mountain house had ever contained. At home, when he ate meat or cheese, he simply squatted down before the low table, on which the food was placed, and drew his sheath knife, a knife that did equally well for cutting up meat, bread, and cheese, or for finishing off a wild boar or an enemy; but here this superfluity of unaccustomed tools puzzled him. He would not betray his ignorance, for, though he did not mind not understanding the ways of the Franks, he knew that Noce was familiar with the use of all these things, and the thought half shaped itself in his mind that perhaps a mere townsman might be mocking at his want of knowledge behind his back. So with marvellous adroitness he watched his hosts and imitated them in every particular, and Noce, who was bursting to prove his superiority, did not dare to offer the slightest hint to the great warrior.

And a great warrior Nik Leka was. Rumour credited him with having slain many men, but all of them with the strictest attention to the etiquette of the Albanian mountains. Moreover, he had bearded the Pasha, or rather one of his officers, in the Konak itself with thousands of soldiers al

round, and with only one or two of his tribesmen within hail. It happened when he was visiting the Vali Pasha about some tribal affair, and he and a lesser chief were at the council with the Pasha and all his officers. He was simple and haughty in his attitude and language, and so irritated a major newly arrived from Constantinople who did not understand the ways of mountaineers, that the unwary officer ventured to tell the Dog of a Christian not to speak so freely in the presence of his Excellency the Vali Pasha. Nik Leka knew enough Turkish to understand that without the help of the interpreter. In two bounds he was across the room, had seized the officious major by the throat, and was about to avenge himself for the insult, when he was dragged from his victim by half a dozen of the council, who knew that the major's life might pay for his ignorant speech. Nik Leka was only pacified by an assurance from the Vali Pasha that the major had spoken out of an empty head, and by a humble apology forced from the astonished offender, who could not understand such an attitude on the part of a Christian who was not even a Frank. Nik Leka returned to his seat on the divan, where he sat through the rest of the proceedings with his moustaches bristling like those of an angry tiger. During the rest of his stay in Albania the major from Constantinople

took good care never to offend in that way again, and Nik Leka's reputation increased accordingly both in the city and in the mountains.

But for the chief himself a luncheon *alla franca* was a much more serious and awe-inspiring event. In spite of the novelty of all around him, by watching carefully he managed to do as the Franks did, and his native tact and dignity pulled him through with hardly a slip. There are not many topics of conversation common to a mountaineer chieftain and a Frank, even a Frank who understands the native mind as the consul-general did, but with Noce for interpreter, and an adroit series of questions, the talk never flagged more than was necessary to allow Nik Leka to make a hearty meal in his unaccustomed surroundings. The luncheon was plentiful but not elaborate. The chief's palate was used only to the plainest food, and he drank no wine, nothing but water fresh from the deep well in the yard by the *kavasshana*. Handicapped as he was by having to manipulate his food with strange instruments, and by being deprived of the proper use of his fingers, the natural means of conveying food to the mouth, which, in their foolishness, the Franks neglect, he made a hungry mountaineer's meal, and happily forbore to return thanks for the hospitality in the Oriental manner.

He must have been as relieved as his hosts were, though neither side showed it, when the coffee and the cigarettes were handed round, for there he was in his own country. With coffee and cigarettes he was to the manner born, and the *zarfs*, in which the little cups were placed, extorted his first tribute of admiration, for he knew them for worked silver from Prisrend and could appreciate them as a connoisseur, whereas the trappings of the luncheon table were so many Frankish mysteries to him. For his own comfort he was not offered another chair, but was conducted to a broad, low divan by the side of the room, on which he could curl one leg up under him in comfort. A little octagonal table was placed in front of him, on which stood his coffee cup and ash tray, and after smoking the cigarettes and drinking the coffee which custom enjoined on him, he salaamed with stately dignity to the ladies and was again conducted across the little hall to the door by the consul-general. There he once more put on his raw hide sandals, and with a warm interchange of compliments in their respective and mutually unknown tongues, the consul-general and he parted at the top of the steps, both heartily thankful that the ceremony had gone off without a hitch.

The *kavass* returned Nik Leka his pistols and

yatághan ...th the added respect due to one who had successfully broken bread with the Konsolos Pasha in his *harem*, and who was apparently none the worse for the ordeal. There may have been an extra touch of stateliness as the chief strode through the wide gateway into the street, but it would not have been noticed by any but his nearest friends. He had too much native dignity to show astonishment at anything, though it is more than probable that his experiences at the Frankish feast provided material for his abrupt and staccato style of conversation for a long while afterwards. Anyhow, he looked upon the entertainment as a kind of additional medal upon his breast, almost ranking with the silver Queen's head which his father had won in the Crimea, and which he wore by the right of inheritance by the side of his own decorations.

# X

## ALBANIAN BLOOD-FEUDS

SCODRA has for many centuries past had an evil reputation for blood-feuds and assassinations. Here, as in most other semi-civilised communities, the law has always been extremely uncertain, and the yataghan and pistol prompt and decisive. And more recently there was no need to go into the mountains for evidence on this point. Between the end of the public garden and the entrance to the Konak was a long lane or passage between two high walls, which shut in houses and gardens on each hand. At the top of this passage were the great gates of two houses; and at the bottom of it sat a mountaineer in Mirdite costume, with a rifle across his knees. For hours together he sat there looking up and down the road, and guarding the entrance to the lane leading to his chief's house. After a time he was relieved by a man the counterpart of himself, who took his seat upon the vacated stone; and then the first guard, after stretching himself and exchanging a few

words with his relief, slowly strode up the lane and disappeared through one of the great gates at the top. That stone by the side of the road was never without a mountaineer with his rifle across his knees, and his pistol in his *sila*, calmly smoking cigarettes and exchanging nods with passers-by of his acquaintance.

In one of the houses at the end of the lane there lived an agha of Middle Albania, who had fled from his own country on account of a blood-feud with a neighbouring family of greater strength and importance than his own. The chief of the most powerful family in the agha's district was a young bey, who had been educated in France, and who, besides the habit of wearing Frankish dress, had brought back from Europe only the vices of his school-fellows and none of their few virtues. In an altercation on some trifling matter, this young bey struck the agha in the face; and, instantly, like the Montagus and Capulets, the relatives and retainers of the two chiefs drew pistol and yataghan upon one another, and a brisk skirmish ensued, in which several men were killed and more wounded. For some time the houses of the two chiefs were in a state of siege, and whenever the rival factions met in the street or in the bazaar, a free fight occurred, to the temporary interruption of business. These

constant battles became such a nuisance, and were carried on so ruthlessly, that the Turkish government at last interfered, and succeeded in deporting the agha and his family to Scodra, where they lived more or less as state prisoners, leaving the bey's family masters of the field.

Nearly every day the agha quitted his walled-in and fortified house and went for a walk in the afternoon. First marched a retainer with a rifle on his shoulder, and a perfect arsenal of smaller weapons in his girdle. About five yards behind came the agha, a tall, lean, well-knit man of fifty, but looking about thirty. His long moustaches were still golden-brown and his sun-burnt, clean-shaven face was smooth and without a wrinkle. His head was shaved above the forehead; and on the top his hair was cropped close and covered with a fez, so that no gray hair told of advancing age. He wore the mountaineer costume of tight trousers and short jacket; but his waistcoat was a blaze of gold embroidery that almost hid the crimson-velvet ground on which it was worked; and his trousers were seamed with heavy stripes of gold lace. He wore jack-boots reaching to just below the knee, and they were triumphs of his boot-maker's art, being worked all over with gold and silver wire in many a fantastic pattern and device. And so he stalked proudly along,

glancing about him with eyes like a hawk, his hand resting on the carved silver butt of his pistol. Behind him, at intervals of about a yard, followed his two sons, each one with his right hand grasping a weapon; and bringing up the rear came two more Mirdites with rifles and pistols. They marched along at a slow and stately pace in Indian file at the side of the road, without exchanging a word except when, at rare intervals, the chief jerked a word over his shoulder at the son following him, and received a grunt in reply.

In this cheerful fashion they strode along past the public garden through the streets to the Turkish quarter, where perhaps they visited an acquaintance; and then they stalked home again as solemnly as if they were attending their own funerals. Some day they expected to meet a body of their enemies in the street, for they owed blood to the bey's family; and then a battle would begin where they stood, and unlucky would be the passer-by, European or otherwise, who did not bolt to the nearest place of shelter, for rifles and pistols would ring sharply out, and bullets whistle up and down the road with little regard for harmless men going about their lawful business. If a company of the Turkish zaptiehs joined in, under the pretence of separating the combatants, matters would be ten times worse, for these latter might

be trusted to fire their Martini-Peabodies "promiscuously" at the crowd, and would in all probability draw the fire of both parties upon themselves for interfering in matters which did not concern them. And the people who would suffer most would be the unwilling spectators who had not been able to get under cover in time. Happily, there was little or no chance of such a catastrophe, for Scodra was, even then, getting too civilised for faction-fights in the streets, and the Pasha knew better than to let such things occur, when he had four or five consuls in the town at one end of the telegraph wire, and the ambassadors at Constantinople at the other. So the bey's family was no doubt carefully watched, and any large party of them would have been promptly prevented from entering the city, had they ventured to approach it; and without a strong body of men it would have been madness to attack our friend the agha, for he was well guarded, and, moreover, under the protection and surveillance of the government.

But isolated affairs of honour were by no means rare, and men who had blood-feuds were frequently shot down in the streets or bazaar. The month of Ramazan was particularly fruitful in such efforts to obtain justice or revenge.

During this month, no good Mussulman may touch food or drink from sunrise to sunset; he may not even drink a single cup of coffee or smoke a solitary cigarette. It can easily be imagined what a painful trial this is when Ramazan occurs in the summer, and how terrible must be this enforced abstinence from food and drink under a broiling July or August sun, when almost every scrap of vegetation is burnt up, when no rain has fallen for months, and the very air seems like the blast from a furnace. The hours between sunset and sunrise are so short in the summer that there is little time for feasting, and the long hours of daylight can with difficulty be whiled away in sleep, even if there is no work to be done in the bazaar or in the city.

And so every now and then during Ramazan groups of hungry and thirsty Mussulmans might be seen standing at their gates, watching for the sun to go down, and scowling savagely at the "dogs of Christians" who went cheerfully about puffing their cigarette smoke after a good meal at midday, and as much coffee as they could drink all day. It by no means improved their tempers to see well-fed "infidels" going home while they were watching for the guns from the castle, with which sunset was saluted during Ramazan, to tell them that their

sixteen-hour fast was over; and so more men were shot down in private quarrels during that month than any other month of the whole year. Only a few years ago, fourteen men were shot in Ramazan; but every year the number of these murders grew less, for Scodra was slowly becoming civilised, and the influence of Europe getting more powerful. Still, about once a month regularly throughout the year, Simon the cook having bothered me to decide whether muscular fowl or leathery beef would be less distasteful to me for dinner, stood fez in hand, evidently brimming over with news. I felt that I was expected to inquire what the news was, and I did so. "Has your lordship heard," he said eagerly, "that Hassan has shot the son of that Hussein?" Simon always referred to his fellow-countrymen by their first names, prefixing with airy indefiniteness the pronoun "that."

"What Hassan?" I remarked, for there were probably two or three hundred in the city.

"The son of that Selim who lives near the bazaar."

Having localised my man, I proceeded: "Why did he shoot Hussein?"

"How should I know? The evil one entered into his head."

As the occurrence happened so recently, it was

difficult to extract more than a bare outline of facts from my cook. The next day, when he had had time to discuss the matter fully with his friends over a glass or two of *raki*, he used to give me full and marvellous details; but on the day the man was shot his brain had not time to grasp more than the simple fact that one man had shot another.

The causes of these unhappy quarrels were frequently very trivial. A dispute over a game at cards, or a jostle in the bazaar would suffice to make a man fire upon his neighbour and shoot him dead. And the matter did not end there. Every member of the murdered man's family was bound in honour to seek out and shoot the murderer wherever he could find him. If he could not find the actual homicide, then he had to kill the brother, or the son, or some near relative; and having in this manner appeased the spirit of his murdered kinsman, the right of blood passed over to the family of the original murderer, and they in their turn might lie in wait for one of their enemy's clan, picking out for choice an only son, or the man whose death would cause the greatest grief and distress to the opposite side. These feuds went on from generation to generation, and the original cause of some of them was lost in antiquity.

In 1857 the Turkish government made a

vigorous attempt to put down the vendetta, for over five hundred men of Scodra alone were wandering houseless and homeless among the mountains on account of blood-feuds. Nearly every tribe accepted the truce excepting the Mirdites; but the wild law of a life for a life was never finally stamped out, and never will be until a firm and settled government makes its administration of justice independent of *baksheesh*, and respected by the tribes as without fear or favour. The Roman Catholic priests did their best to stop the blood-feud in the mountains, but without avail. A reforming young priest once went so far as to excommunicate a man who had notoriously killed several persons in a blood-feud. The murderer, believing himself shut out from heaven, not by his own misdeeds, but by the over-zealous action of the priest, called upon him, and threatened him with instant death if he did not then and there withdraw the sentence of excommunication. The poor priest tried to shuffle out of it, but in vain; the mountaineer was inexorable, and after obtaining his absolution, marched off with the warning that His Reverence had better confine himself for the future to his own province.

A quarrel once arose between two friends because one had promised the other fourteen cartridges, and afterwards refused them, and as a

consequence, twelve men lost their lives in one day. A terrible feud between two mountaineer families had its origin in a pig eating the young crops of a neighbour as they were springing up. The owner of the crops shot the pig, and the owner of the pig instantly shot the slayer of his animal; and many years passed and many lives were lost before this blood-feud was appeased and the *bessa* established. But often the causes of a blood-feud were serious enough. Many arose from a young girl having been carried off without her parents' consent, and in Albania any insult to a woman was promptly punished with death. An injured husband was bound to avenge the stain on his family and himself by shooting the offender, or ever remain a disgraced and dishonoured man.

One day I was going along a street in the Turkish quarter when I saw a head and the barrel of a rifle protruding round the corner of a by-street just ahead of me. When I reached the spot I saw a young Mussulman of the town sitting calmly on a large stone, like the agha's mountaineer, but with a different purpose. In the street I had just come up was the entrance to his enemy's house, and every day for weeks past he had been watching that doorway for several hours a day. When he heard footsteps coming, he peeped round the corner, as he did when I came along; but generally

he sat on his stone, whence he could just see the gateway. His family was at feud with the owner of the house, and the last victim who fell was his brother, shot as he was going to his shop in the bazaar. The avenger of blood was a tall youth about twenty-three years of age, and he used to wait patiently in the hope that his enemy or his enemy's son would come out of those great gates, so that he might avenge his brother. They owed him blood, and so, until he had fired, no one could fire upon him. The inhabitants of the house knew that they were watched, and now and then, when the young man was not at his post, the father or son slipped out, and returned stealthily after *aksham;* but the servants, women, and cousins moved in and out freely all day, for in Albania no man touches a woman, and the distant relatives were comparatively safe as long as the chief offender was unharmed. A day came when the young fellow's long vigil was successful; the enemy left the house thinking all safe, and then a rifle bullet avenged his dead brother's blood. He waited long and patiently, and until he had attained his object did not raise the siege of the house. Nothing could turn him from his purpose, for he would be disgraced for ever if his brother's murder had gone unavenged.

Along the street which we knew as the

Boulevard Diplomatique, not far from the stone on which the avenger of blood was sitting, there used to stroll a personage in a large measure accountable for the persistence of the blood-feud in Albania. He was a stout little gentleman in a Stambouli uniform, with his fez slightly on the back of his head, and his hands crossed behind him, twiddling a string of amber beads. He was a jovial-looking little man, although he walked so slowly and solemnly, with his two secretaries or attendants behind him. He represented the blind goddess, for he was the supreme judge of the mercantile court. He was also a Levantine Greek and a plausible and unscrupulous rogue.

With what a charming air of old-fashioned courtesy he saluted us! how politely and even eloquently he discoursed of indifferent topics of the day! In his court he was just as polite; but the suitors knew that it was quite as well to have the judge on their side, and that his taste for curious and antique works of art was rather more expensive than his salary would permit him to gratify; and so, somehow or other, before an important case came on, valuable rugs or chased silver ornaments used to find their way to the judge's house as presents. Should Barbelushi and Skreli go to law, and should Barbelushi, foolishly relying on what he considered the justice of his

cause, omit to play a counter-move to the gloriously patterned carpet that had mysteriously found its way from Skreli's house to the President's, he inevitably lost his case; the matter was too simple for a moment's doubt. But let us suppose that a friend of Barbelushi had informed our little acquaintance that a pistol with a magnificently carved silver butt was awaiting his acceptance, and that only Barbelushi's native modesty had prevented him from offering it long since as a testimony of regard for so upright and learned a judge; then the matter became more complicated, and it required all the ingenuity and tact of a Greek to see that justice was done.

When the case came on the President of the Court was even more courteous and affable to the litigants than usual; he had weighed the matter over well, and had decided, we will say, that he had plenty of carpets for the present; that Barbelushi's pistol was a very handsome specimen, and that perhaps by judicious hints the fellow to it, which he knew was in existence, might be enticed from Barbelushi's house to his own. When the arguments had been heard, the President and his two colleagues conferred over the matter before giving their judgment, and the former spoke very strongly in favour of the justice of Barbelushi's claim—so strongly in fact that the two colleagues,

seeing which way the wind was blowing, and being too wise in their generation to oppose their chief, gave their votes for Barbelushi. Thereupon the President played a master stroke, and gave his own vote for Skreli; but being outvoted, judgment was recorded for Barbelushi. The latter, rejoiced at winning his suit, returned the judge his most grateful thanks for the eminent justice and skill in the law displayed by his Excellency; and going home at once despatched the second pistol as a proof of his gratitude.

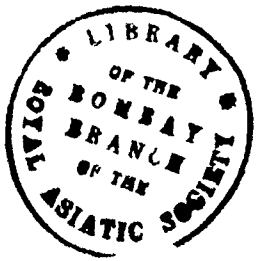
But poor Skreli was naturally much disappointed, and fancied that his carpet was lost for nothing. However, he was too good a fish to be thrown away, so the President took the first opportunity of condoling with him on his misfortune, and assured him that it was entirely owing to the majority being on the other side; for that, as the records of the court would show, he himself voted for Skreli. And all this was said with so much apparent sympathy, and with so much sorrow that his efforts should have been unavailing, that the simple Skreli was almost consoled for his loss, and went home resolving that before his next lawsuit a much better carpet should become the property of so worthy and upright a judge. And thus all parties were quite satisfied; and the law, as in other parts of the

world, got the oyster while the litigants got the shells.

But tricks, however cunning, get seen through at last, and the judge and his predecessors in office were no doubt largely responsible for that hole in the wall of the house opposite to us. The owner of the house evidently did not think his white wall disfigured by the hole, for he had not taken the trouble to plaster it up, though it was probably plugged on the inside to keep out the draught. There were two kinds of justice in Albania, and the bullet hole served as the visible sign of one, as the President of the Court did of the other. Long before the Ottomans were heard of, the law of the blood-feud and of the responsibility of the family for the misdeeds of all its members was the only code known; and under the Turks the Albanians had not become sufficiently civilised to perceive the advantages of the government method, so those of them who had not mixed much with Europeans used to draw their pistols when they met an enemy, instead of dragging him before the court. Usually the Mussulmans of the town and the Christians of the mountains went everywhere with pistols and yataghan in their belts; only the Christians of the city carried no arms. The justice of the law-court was uncertain, expensive, and unsuited to a nation of warriors; while the

blood-feud was honourable and cost no more than a charge of powder and a bullet. And so the streets and bazaar of Scodra used to be enlivened by an interchange of shots whenever the members of families which had blood between them encountered one another.

But all this was part of the old regime. The new kingdom of Albania will of course abolish the blood-feud, a thing which the Turks and the priests did very frequently, but without finality. The law-courts' method of settling disputes has so far not endeared itself to the tribesmen, and Europeans must not be astonished if it takes some little time and a good deal of persuasion to make the Albanians conscious of its beauties.



# XI

## IN THE ALBANIAN MOUNTAINS

LIVING in Scodra did not mean uninterrupted residence in the city. In order to gain a real and clear idea of the people, mountaineers as well as towns men, it was necessary to make many excursions into the country, visits to the villages and shooting expeditions, and so it happened that I found myself sitting on an old packing-case outside an Albanian cottage in the Great Mountains, looking down a long arid slope of stony plain to the distant hills across the lake. At my side a lithe, broad-shouldered mountaineer sat cross-legged upon a thick cloak spread upon the boards. It was a brilliantly hot afternoon in July, and the sun would have been unbearable were it not for a row of poplar trees which sheltered us from the heat without obscuring the view, and so I and my companion sat still in the shade and watched the thin blue rings of smoke from our cigarettes floating lazily upwards in the heavy air. We did not talk very much; but as the mountaineer was

an intelligent man and actually spoke Italian, I gained a good deal of information from him at first hand. He was a keen politician in his way, and had wonderful odds and ends of knowledge stowed away in his brain; but his little world was only the mountain and plain of North Albania, and his idea of Europe was entirely derived from what he saw of the Austrian Lloyd steamers at the port of Medua. As he discoursed upon his fellow-countrymen, the Sultan, Montenegro, and the Great Powers—utterly bewildered by matters which are to a European the simplest things in the world—he seemed to me like a man groping in the dark, straining his eyes to pierce the gloom that draws so impalpable and yet so dense a veil between him and what he seeks. And somehow, on that dreamy afternoon, when mountain, plain and lake slept under the July sun, I found myself half slipping into his mode of thought; and as I leaned back against the cottage wall and looked with half-shut eyes at the blue haze quivering in the valley below, my life in England seemed a thing of the remote past; I seemed to have always lived in Albania, instead of only a few years. Perhaps, after all, the Shkypetars were right and the European sovereigns were only chiefs of Frankish tribes, who took advantage of the quarrels among the Sultan's subjects to further

their own petty aims. All other countries seemed vague and unreal, and only the politics of the rocks and lowlands of Albania appeared of any consequence.

Soon I was roused from my dream. Of course my friend knew that I was an Inglese; that all the Inglese were very rich; and that, as they have no room in their own little country, they wandered about the territories of the other Frankish tribes, much as his own clan of Skreli was forced by want of pasturage to migrate every year to the richer land by the coast near Medua; so, to increase his knowledge, he asked me as delicately as possible, in order not to hurt my feelings by the comparison, whether London was as big as Scodra. I informed him that in my country there were a thousand towns bigger than Scodra, and that he might ride for three or four hours in a straight line through the bazaars and streets of London without getting out into the country. The struggle between incredulity and politeness was plainly shown on the mountaineer's face; and I saw that I had lost greatly in his esteem by my assertion, and that he looked upon me—to put it plainly—as a liar. He knew from priests and other Franks that the Inglese have no country but London, a miserable place, where it rains all the year; and where no one would stop who was not

forced, as is proved by all the Inglese who are free to move wandering into other Frankish lands, and even into the realms of the Sultan. Nothing would shake his opinion; it was hopeless to fight against that wall of colossal ignorance. We English are too given to thinking that all foreigners see us as we see ourselves; not as merely the inhabitants of two little islands in the northern sea, but as the masters of an empire that rings the circle of the world and floats its navies upon every sea. The more ignorant foreigners, who draw their information from priests or demagogic newspapers, look on England as a foggy island peopled by uncouth heretics, who are only tolerated because they fling gold broadcast in every direction. My Skreli friend had no doubt derived his geographical and historical knowledge from some French or Russian source, and therefore despised me as an untruthful braggart, though he was too polite and perhaps too politic to say so.

I had gone up into the mountains for a few days, to see village life and to get a breath of fresh air, for the lowlands and the city were stifling. Not a drop of rain had fallen for two months; the grass had become sand, and the plants were drooping in the gardens for want of water. The little village of Zagora, in which I was spending a day or two, lies at the head of the

long, wedge-shaped piece of stony land, running up from the lake and shut in by bare and lofty mountains, which constitutes the territory of the Skreli tribe. Down the centre of this valley, and at the bottom of a steep ravine, runs the river which waters the arable land. A narrow strip of ground on each bank is cultivated, forming a winding ribbon of dingy and sun-burnt green between the bordering expanses of white stones and parched rocks. But the tribe has its winter pasturage near Medua; and towards autumn the whole of Skreli, men, women, and children, with their flocks and their herds, their horses and their household goods, desert their mountain home and file in long procession across the stony plain, through the bazaar of Scodra, and so, by way of the Zadrima, to Medùa. My companion, finding I could not be trusted to tell him of my own country, changed the subject to himself and his belongings, which were for me more interesting topics than comparisons between London and Scodra. And so I learned that in summer-time he was a farmer in the mountains, and in winter a boatman at the wretched seaport of San Giovanni di Medua, where he had learned a fair amount of Italian while bringing passengers and their baggage to shore. In this fashion he managed to earn

THE ROAD TO SCODRA.

Malissori fishermen near the Lake.

THE ROAD TO SCODRA.

Malissori farmers going to the Bazaar.

enough money to make him a little bit of a mountain dandy, and to enable him to carry better arms than the mountaineers of the neighbouring tribes who spend all the year round in their rocky homes. He informed me that he was very well known at the port, and got plenty to do; and then, being in confidential mood, told me about his family and his children, and that he had a blood-feud with one of the most powerful families of the neighbouring Hotti tribe, and so never went out of the village alone, for fear he should be shot for the blood he owed his enemies. His sister, he explained, married a man of Hotti, and it was considered a splendid match, as that tribe is the most powerful in the Great Mountains, and takes the post of honour in time of war. About a year after the marriage, the husband repudiated his bride, and sent her home, giving no reason for the outrage, but merely saying that he was not going to keep the woman any longer. Such an insult was not to be tolerated; so my host and his brother, seeing that there was no chance of obtaining for their sister the restitution of her rights, looked out for an opportunity of killing their brother-in-law.

"He was very cunning," said my host reflectively, playing with his pistol; "but I waited for him every day, and at last I caught

him alone, and then I shot him for the slight he had dared to put on our family."

"And so you owe them blood?"

He grinned, and arranged his pistols in his leather *sila*. "His father and brothers," he replied, "often come into our country to look for me, and wait for me outside the bazaar or on the road to Scodra; but I never go into the city without my brother and my relations; so they cannot exact the penalty without fighting a battle."

"But surely that must be a great nuisance for you?"

He shrugged his shoulders: "Some day they will catch me alone, as I caught him, and then they will shoot me if they can."

"And your sister?"

"She is in the city."

"Has she married again?"

"Married? Oh no! She begs: she has her child——" Then, seeing my look of astonishment, he added: "What is she to do? We cannot support her; she does not belong to us now; and the Hotti will not keep her. But I have avenged the insult; I have shot her husband."

Truly, honour and dishonour are arbitrary words! My companion was, according to his own code, a man of strict honour. His sister had been

repudiated by her husband without cause or reason; and he felt that he had done everything he could be expected to do when he had shot the erring husband and left the poor woman to escape starvation as best she might by begging in the streets of Scodra a bare subsistence for herself and child!

But the sun had been gradually sinking towards Mount Rumia, and once he was below the hills everything would be dark. The women, with little kegs strapped on their shoulders, came out of the cottages and struck across the fields. "They are going to draw water from the river," explained my companion; "shall we go to see them?" He carefully looked to his arms, and then we rose and, joining two or three other men, strolled through the maize and tobacco fields, between the wait-a-bit thorn hedges, to the ravine. During the violent rains of autumn and winter, the Prolitar, as the river is called, dashes a foaming torrent along its rocky bed; but at the end of the summer it had become like most mountain streams, a quiet little river, half lost among the pebbles it flows over. In Indian file we descended the narrow path that winds through the brushwood edging the steep sides of the ravine, and I should have been put to shame by the activity and sure-footedness of the young

girls, were it not that I knew they would make a much worse scramble of it than I did had they boots on their feet instead of raw-hide sandals. Soon we got to the bottom, and then we seemed to be in an amphitheatre, for, owing to the abrupt turns and winds of the river, we were shut in on all sides by almost perpendicular walls of rock. The floor of the ravine was covered with sand and pebbles, and down the centre trickled the dwindling stream, across which we easily jumped. The narrow space was crowded with the inhabitants of all the Skreli villages, whose only water-supply in summer is drawn from the curious well in that part of the river's bed. The men lounged about conversing in groups, and every now and then a marksman fired his pistol at a stone or bush on the side of the cliff with a bang that startled the echoes from crag to crag, and made one fancy, from the violence of the concussion, that a hundred-ton gun at least had been discharged.

Under an overhanging rock, a quaint parapet and basin have been carved out of the living stone, and round them the maids and matrons were gathered in picturesque groups, laughing and chattering. It was the mouth of a well that sinks deep down beneath the bed of the river, and is never dry in summer. When the rains come and

send the torrent from the mountains, the well and its curious basin are covered deeply by the tossing waters; but when the hot weather returns and the river runs nearly dry, the well is uncovered again, and the buckets and long ropes are eagerly competed for by the crowd of women, who fill their little wooden kegs every day just before sunset. Only one man came down to draw water, an old white-headed man, who was bent now and infirm, but who had evidently been a magnificent broad-shouldered giant of over six feet in height. I asked why he was drawing water for himself. "Oh!" was the reply, "he has no women or relations; he lives by himself; besides, he is quite crazy." Poor old man! He was the last of his family; his wife and daughters were dead; and his sons had succumbed to steel, bullet, or fever, leaving him alone in his old age. The border wars, blood-feuds and malaria of the lowlands, that had taken away his brothers and sons, had passed him by, and left him an infirm veteran, no longer a great warrior, but a useless survival of the past. He spoke to no one, but having filled his keg, shouldered it, and toiled slowly and alone up the steep path.

The shadows deepened among the cliffs; the last woman filled her barrel and staggered panting up the rocky ascent; and so we returned home too, my Malsior friend keeping his hand on his

pistols and glancing suspiciously at every bush, for perhaps some Hotti avenger might be lurking in the deep shadows and even now levelling a pistol or rifle. Luckily, there was no enemy near, and we reached the village in safety, or rather the row of six tiny houses which was the principal part of the hamlet. Most mountain cottages are built detached from one another, and consist simply of a single room on the bare ground, with perhaps a small apartment screened off for the mistress of the house; but here were half a dozen cottages built all in a row like modern villas, and only inhabited on the first floor, after the fashion of the houses in Scodra. Each house in the row had its ladder leading up to its first floor, and its little balcony with the living-room opening out of it. In no other mountain village have I seen this arrangement, which was evidently an innovation on the received architecture of the Malissori, and was no doubt to be ascribed to the tribe's yearly residence on the sea-coast.

The usual mountaineer's supper was soon prepared—roast mutton and cakes drenched in honey, and then, after coffee and more cigarettes, I thought of going to rest, for it had been a long day since I roused my little household in Scodra at about two hours after midnight, before the sun had begun to rise. I had no fancy for sharing the

stuffy little inner room with the grandmother, the mother, the wife, and the children of my host, not to mention other less visible occupants, nor a plank bed on the balcony with a couple of mountaineers; and that was why I brought the little tent that gleamed white in the moonlight through the shrubs among which it was pitched. My hostess and her sister had cut me plenty of soft fern in the afternoon and spread it on the floor of my tent; and so, after wishing my Albanian friends "Good-night," I retired to my own lodgings. As I stumbled through the thicket by the imperfect light, my footsteps roused the watchdogs, which strained fiercely at their chains and made the valley ring with their savage barking. From the distance came an answering chorus of yelps, marking the position of neighbouring villages in the darkness of the night. The moon, already low down in the sky, cast long shadows across the land, and almost obscured the glitter of the stars, and dimmed the brilliance of the comet that was blazing away across the heavens above the row of tall poplar trees outside the village. Creeping head first into my narrow tent, I wrapped myself in a rug, stretching full length upon the fern, the softest couch a man can have; and soon the baying of the watchdogs wove itself, an indistinct bass, into the current of my dreams.

## XII

### A NIGHT IN RAMAZAN.

A YEAR had passed since I entered Scodra for the first time to the roar of the guns of the ancient Castle announcing the passing of Ramazan, and the month of fasting had come round again. It had been a terribly hot day. All day long, heavy black clouds had rolled up from the Adriatic and circled round the mountains that shut in plain and lake; but not a drop of rain had fallen upon the parched and dried-up soil. The growling of the thunder had been incessant, though not a breath of air had stirred the heavy leaves, or freshened the close, unwholesome atmosphere that scorched throat and lungs, and seemed to weigh oppressively upon one's very limbs.

But evening came at last, and the good folk of Scodra trudged slowly homeward from the bazaar. In the high-road facing the burial-ground in which Ali Haidaar Pasha lies buried, a knot of Mohammedans in gold-embroidered jackets and voluminous

*fustanelles* were standing just outside the great double gates leading to the courtyard of one of the richest aghas in the city. They were watching for the evening gun from the citadel, which would tell them that their weary fast was over for the day, and that they might go in to the evening meal. From sunrise to sunset not a morsel of food, not a single cup of coffee, had touched their lips; they had passed the long hot hours of a sultry summer day without even drinking a drop of water or smoking a single cigarette. Some of them had had to work during the day, and some had tried to sleep away the laggard hours in the stifling rooms of the *harem*, and it was small wonder if, faint and exhausted, they looked with angry eyes upon the Christian shopkeepers and labourers who plodded along the dusty road, puffing at their cigarettes. We were in the last quarter of the moon, for it was more than three weeks ago that the great fast of Ramazan began, and the strain was beginning to tell even upon the strongest men, and to show itself in their haggard looks and hollow cheeks. But at last the sixteen sultry hours of fasting were coming to a close. The city already lay in shadow, for the sun had sunk behind Mount Tarabosh, though the castle rock and the citadel itself were still in full sunlight.

Gradually the shadows crept up the hill and

quenched the blaze of light in which the parapets were bathed, and then the eyes of the watchers were gladdened by the dull red flash, followed by a ball of smoke that shot out between the parapets from one of the old iron guns that kept the key of North Albania before the modern fort on Mount Tarabosh was built. At the same moment the wailing cry of half a dozen muezzins rang out from the mosques close by, and with a sigh of relief the expectant group turned and trooped, with swaying *fustanelles* and a jauntier air, through the great gates, to break its long fast at the evening meal, which a great clattering among the women-kind showed to be nearly ready.

This great fast is held in memory of the Hegira; but though all good Mohammedans religiously fast during the day, yet they are allowed to feast during the night-hours between sunset and sunrise. Very often friends and relations come to these evening festivities, and sometimes strangers are invited. During the past week we had twice been to entertainments at Mohammedan houses after nightfall, and that night we were going again with an English friend who was spending a week or two in Scodra, and was naturally anxious to see all that he could of native life. Luckily we had not been invited to the tedious dinner or supper, but only to the "musical at home" which was to

be held afterwards; and so, as we had a little time to spare, we entered a café to see how the evening was passing there. We sat down on a bench against the wall, in front of a bare wooden table, and called for coffee. Our entry caused some little sensation, for I was well known; and the sight of two Franks in a poor native café was something out of the common. However, our enterprise was not rewarded, for the place was deplorably dull; two or three groups of poorer Albanians sitting gloomily over their coffee were the only representatives of the merry company we had hoped to see; while in the centre of the room two Mohammedans were having their heads shaved by the silent proprietor of the combined khan and barber's shop and his assistant. My friend was in high spirits when we entered; but a few minutes of this funereal gloom effectually took all the fun out of him, and so we hastily swallowed our coffee, and left the melancholy "khanji" still scraping away at his customer's forehead.

The beginning of the evening had not been promising, but I consoled my visitor with the assurance that at Fiscta Agha's house things would be very different. We therefore made a fresh start, accompanied by Marco, a Christian of the town who, on the strength of being able to say "Yes, sir," and "Oui, monsieur," in addition to the

broken Italian common to his kind, passed for a skilled linguist, and looked upon all travellers as his lawful prey. He preceded us, dressed in full mountaineer costume, over which he wore a shabby old ulster several sizes too small for him, put on as a precaution against the fever that he insisted was lurking in the sultry night-air. In his right hand he carried a tightly-rolled, lady's umbrella of green silk, a gift from his last master; and in his left he swung a lantern, to guide us through the narrow streets of the Mussulman quarter. On our way we passed three Zingari who were playing softly the air of Hadji Ali; and then passing out of the narrow street into an open space, we came to the great double gates of Fiscta Agha's house. After the usual challenges, one wing of the gate swung open, and we entered the courtyard, being rather taken aback by what seemed to be the ghost of a huge white bird stretched across the yard. It was, however, only the agha's best *fustanelle* which he had had washed in view of the coming Feast of Bairam, and had hung across the courtyard to dry. As the *fustanelle* was thirty or forty yards long round the hem, it was not surprising that it seemed to stretch through the darkness like the white wings of some giant bird, to eyes not accustomed to such amplitude of petticoat.

By the light from an open door we made for

the wooden staircase that led to the balcony on the first floor, where Fiscta Agha greeted us, and escorted us to the room in which the merrymaking was going on. The place was crowded; but by dint of pushing and elbowing, the agha piloted us across the floor to the seat of honour on the divan by his side. Instantly an attendant gave us each a brass ashpan, another offered us cigarettes with his hand on his heart, a third brought us coffee, and a fourth sweetmeats. We were bound by etiquette to refuse nothing, and the coffee and cigarettes we enjoyed; but the sugar plums we slipped into our pocket-handkerchiefs at the first convenient opportunity. After we had exchanged compliments with our host and our friends and acquaintances, the music, which our entrance had interrupted, struck up again. The musicians were three in number, and squatted on the floor at the opposite end of the room. The leader played on the "guzla," a kind of mandoline, across whose two wire strings he tinkled his little cherry-bark "plectrum" with a grave and dignified air. By his side was an old man, with huge horn spectacles balanced on his hooked nose, who held a fiddle upon the floor at arm's length, and scraped away solemnly with a clumsy bow on the strings that were turned away from him. The third musician was a pale and melancholy youth, who banged a

tambourine upon his knuckles, knees, and elbows, with mournful repetition, going through all his movements as if he were moved by clockwork. Of course they played "Hadji Ali, the Pirate of Dulcigno," as surely as the street-boy at home whistles the latest comic song; for Hadji Ali was an Albanian hero, and the Mussulmans of Scodra were in heroic mood just then. It was a weird and plaintive melody in the minor key, necessitated by the setting of the two wire strings of the guzla, and, though it sounded like a dirge pure and simple, was played in Scodra at feasts and festivals of every kind. Occasionally, the tambourine broke into a long-drawn howl, drawling Hadji Ali's name through his nose, in a fashion that reminded us of a dog baying the moon. There are fifty or sixty verses of "Hadji Ali," and though the tambourine's effort was the only attempt at singing, the musicians took us religiously through the air over and over again till the full number of verses was accomplished. It seemed never ending; but at last, just as we were falling asleep, the wailing tune faded softly away, and the Hadji might be considered as disposed of for the night.

More coffee, more sweatmeats, and more cigarettes were pressed upon us, and then some of the servants began to clear a space in the centre

of the room by pushing the people into the corners and making them stand close round the walls. Presently a hungry-looking young fellow, dressed simply in a loose cotton shirt and trousers, began walking round in a circle, keeping time to the rhythm of the three musicians, who had struck up another plaintive air. He walked round and round, waving his hands and balancing himself first on one foot and then on the other, but doing nothing else, while we sat anxiously wondering when he was going to begin. My English friend soon had enough of that sort of thing, and whispered to me to lend him my scarf-pin. He then opened his pocket-knife, and waited resignedly for the dance to end. As soon as he got his opportunity, he made signs to Fiscta Agha that he was going to perform something; and wrapping his handkerchief tightly round his thumb, he pricked his skin surreptitiously and squeezed out a drop of blood. Then with his knife he went through the pantomime of cutting off his thumb by smearing the blood in a thin line round beneath the nail. The Albanians crowded round, looking on him as an escaped lunatic, when suddenly with a rapid lick of his tongue and a dab of his handkerchief he made the long gash disappear, and completely healed what looked like a very serious wound. This feat aroused every one's curiosity; we were

nearly stifled by the pressure of the onlookers, and my friend had to do his trick over and over again until his thumb was as full of holes as a sieve, and he bitterly repented his desire for fame. Luckily for him, a counter attraction drew the public attention from him, and a scolding voice made every one turn to look at the other side of the room, where three small boys had profited by the general crowding round our divan to take a yataghan from the wall and to set to work at carving their thumbs and fingers in imitation of the marvellous Frank. Happily, before much harm was done, the yataghan was taken away and the boys soundly cuffed; and I quietly restored the pin to my scarf in the general confusion.

After more coffee, came the great dance of the evening, and again the gaunt youth pirouetted round the ring. That time, however, something more striking was to be performed, and so one of the beys lent him his white fustanelle; another a gold-embroidered jacket and waistcoat of crimson cloth; a third, his gaiters, ornamented in similar fashion; and a fourth unwound the long silk sash from his waist and threw it to the dancer. Again the slow rhythmic walk began to the melancholy music of the guzla; but after a few circles the dancer stopped once more. Fiscta Agha and Ibrahim Bey Castrati then drew their keen, blue

Damascus blades, inlaid with verses of the Koran in gold, from their scabbards, and handed them to the silent dancer, who received them solemnly, and once more retired to the centre of the ring. Taking the yataghans by their hilts, he stretched out his arms, placed the sharp points in his girdle, and resumed his walk round the room. After a few circles, the music quickened, and the dancer broke into a polka-mazurka step, with the blades still sticking into his girdle. Again the music got faster; the colour rose to the dancer's face; he raised the points of the yataghans and placed them beneath his armpits, and every few paces bumped the floor first with one knee and then with the other. Faster and faster grew the music, wilder and wilder grew the dancer, dashing himself on the floor with ever-increasing energy, with arms still outstretched and points turned inwards; till at last he burst into a frantic valse in the middle of the room, and spun round, a confused mass of white *fustanelle* and gold and scarlet coat, with bright steel-blue blades gleaming beneath his extended arms. Suddenly both music and dancer stopped, and hurriedly returning the yataghans to their owners, the performer plunged into the crowd of onlookers, and disappeared to take off his borrowed finery. No one troubled to applaud; it was the dancer's business; he

was paid for it, and had done his duty, that was all.

By that time it was considerably past midnight, and so some one was sent to rouse Marco from the slumber into which much coffee and unlimited cigarettes had plunged him. As for ourselves, we each drained at a gulp, before leaving, a tumbler of the sweet pink sherbet that the Albanians love, for our throats felt like lime-kilns from excessive smoking. I had the curiosity to count the cigarette ends in my ashpan; there were seventeen, and though the tobacco was good, yet the paper was very coarse and hot. Our rising was the signal for the general break-up of the entertainment. Fiscta Agha saw us to the great gates; and, as we followed the sleepy Marco and his lantern over the cobble-stones that paved the road, the mournful melody of "Hadji Ali" moaned through the warm still air from the side-street down which the three musicians were solemnly making their homeward way.

## XIII

### AN ALBANIAN WEDDING

It is always a trying circumstance for the master of the house to have a wedding in his family, and, serious as the matter is in England, it was infinitely worse in North Albania, where a peculiar and tedious etiquette prescribed endless ceremonies, and allowed no wished-for "going away," to put a period to the sufferings of bridegroom and guests. However, as I was the Konsolos Vakeel, and the happy man was my servant on the only occasion when there was a wedding "in the family," I had the satisfaction of knowing that if I looked as bored as a Pasha, I was only shedding a greater dignity on the proceedings. Besides, I was very glad to be able to penetrate for once behind the veil of mystery that shrouds the interior of Albanian houses, and to see the strange ceremonies of marriage as an honoured guest.

Achmet, my Turkish servant, having a claim on the Government, had just been made Inspector of Forests in Mid-Albania, and a week or two ago

had ridden off, followed by a mountaineer leading a pack-horse laden with the new official's belongings. No doubt he has long since repaid himself all that the Government ever owed him, and, having learned wisdom in adversity, will take good care never to be reduced to waiting on a Frank again.

To replace Achmet I took a tall, well-made Albanian, with a fierce moustache and gentle manner, who spoke Italian well, and had the reputation of being honest and trustworthy. He soon got into my ways, but remained unaccountably shy and preoccupied. One morning Simon, the cook, explained the mystery. "That man Luka," he said, speaking of his fellow-servant as if he were miles off, instead of in the kitchen, "begs your Excellency's pardon, but he wishes to be married." I was not an excellency, and never shall be anything so exalted, but we got brevet rank in Scodra; for all that, I remarked that I was very pleased to hear it, and then Simon, cautiously shutting the door, and standing, fez in hand, eagerly entered into the subject, drawing upon a fertile imagination for the details.

In Albania it is etiquette for a man about to marry to be very much ashamed of himself and not to mention the subject at all, but to leave everything to the old women of his family, who

take a professional delight in seeing that every ceremony and superstition is rigidly adhered to. Luka himself knew that Europeans are, as a rule, not ashamed of their wives, but will even be seen with them in public, and let them speak to other men. He felt that he had a sort of connection with Europe, being my servant, and as I was naturally obliged to outrage his modesty, so far as to mention the subject in discussing the future arrangements of my household, the struggle which went on in his mind as he attempted to engraft the brazen-faced publicity of the European upon the bashful reticence of the Albanian, rendered his face a study to be remembered. One morning, about three weeks after his entering my service, he placed a note on the table just as I was beginning breakfast, and hurried out of the room. It was an invitation, written, as I afterwards discovered, at Luka's dictation, by a Dalmatian innkeeper who lived near, begging me to do him the great honour of being present at his "nuptials, that is to say, marriage," on the following Sunday. I replied that I should be very pleased to be there, whereupon Luka blushed deeply, and thanked me profoundly. There was no doubt about it. My servant was irrevocably pledged to matrimony with a girl he had never seen, upon the magnificent income represented by the wages he received from me;

and there could be no drawing back, for breach of promise is punished by a pistol bullet in Albania.

Luka belonged to one of the few families in Scodra that profess the Orthodox faith, and so about ten o'clock on Sunday morning, M. Ladislas, a Hungarian friend, and I went to the little church in which the ceremony was to take place. It was the church in which the marriage of the consul to the daughter of his dragoman had been celebrated rather over a year previously. A group of friends and lookers-on had already assembled before the door, and four men in four different costumes were dancing the ancient Romaic dance to the music of a two-stringed fiddle. Presently an inrush of boys and idlers announced the approach of the bride, and she entered the courtyard astride of the old white horse that did duty at every marriage ceremony in Scodra, with her head tied up in a scarlet silk veil, surmounted by the *helman* or bridal crown, so that from the time she left her father's house to her arrival in the church she saw absolutely nothing. She was supported in the high-peaked saddle by her father and a near relation, behind her followed her relatives, male and female, while before her young men danced in a line with joined hands, singing in monotonous cadence an Albanian marriage song.

"How beautiful the bride is !—Marshallah !
She has a broad forehead !—Marshallah !
She has eyebrows like ropes !—Marshallah !
She has eyes like coffee cups !—Marshallah !
She has cheeks like vermillion !—Marshallah !
She has a nose of fine shape !—Marshallah !
She has a mouth like a pill-box !—Marshallah !
She has teeth like pearls !—Marshallah !
She has a figure like a cypress tree !—Marshallah ! Marshallah !"

Naturally, the recital of such a catalogue of beauties in the bride's presence would bring down upon her the severest penalties of the evil eye; so to avert all misfortune the chorus took up the cry "Marshallah" after each charm had been dilated upon, and prolonged it in a weird, drawling howl.

The old horse halted of his own accord before the church door, five or six men unfolded a huge piece of cloth and held it up to screen the bride, and then the father seized the unresisting girl round the waist and literally hauled her off her lofty perch. The mother and the officiating old ladies unpacked the bride's head in the church porch, and after arranging her dress pushed her gently into the church. It was considered grossly immodest for a girl who was going to be married to take the slightest interest in the proceedings, or to show more signs of life than she could possibly help, so, with her face unveiled in public for the first time in her life, her hands clasped before her,

and her eyes fixed on her toes, she submitted to be pushed forward, seemingly more dead than alive, to the centre of the church, where a couple of reading desks were placed side by side, with a napkin, two withered wreaths, and a dirty little brown glass tumbler half full of red wine with a spoon sticking up in it, arranged upon them. The bride was placed before the left-hand desk, and a gorgeous object she was. Her full Turkish trousers, which she had no doubt borrowed for the occasion, were of immense folds of the finest silk gauze finished round the ankle with heavy gold embroidery, and at the waist also glorious with gold. Her waistcoat was of purple velvet broidered in gold thread, with many a quaint device that almost hid the stuff, and, being unfastened in front, showed the delicate gauzy chemise of finest white striped silk. Round her waist was bound a brilliant sash of many-hued silk, and over all hung the long coat of crimson cloth, heavily worked with black silk braid. Her hair and eyebrows were dyed a brilliant and obvious black, and her head-dress was ornamented with long rows of silver-gilt coins and chains; but the effect of her dress was rather spoiled by the natty little patent leather boots, seamed with white, *alla franca*, which she wore instead of the red leather slippers that would form the natural finish to her

dress. So she stood, with downcast eyes and folded hands, supported by her witnesses, before her reading desk; but as yet there was no sign of the bridegroom. He disappeared directly after breakfast that morning, and for a moment the thought entered my mind that perhaps he had repented of his rashness, and was then crossing the mountains in full flight. But no. As soon as the bride was well settled in her place, a commotion arose among the little knot of men near the door, and Luka was ejected from his concealment and pushed forward, apparently deeply reluctant, to his betrothed's side. He also was arrayed for the wedding, and sported an old pair of dress trousers, given him by some English traveller, and a rough pea jacket, into the pocket of which he crumpled his Turkish fez as he took his place before the right-hand desk. The old *papas* had put on his most gorgeous robe, and let down his long grey hair over his shoulders for the occasion. He took no notice of the happy pair beyond a glance to see that they were in position, but turned his back on them and went through the opening part of the ceremony at full gallop, with a sublime air of bored indifference, droning through his nose, and only punctuating his reading by gasps for breath.

Luka was not bold enough to defy the Albanian Mrs. Grundy by turning his head, but I caught

him squinting painfully out of the corner of his eye at the girl he was being married to but had not yet seen. As for the bride, she remained immovable, regardless of the prods and tweaks at her clothes, with which the old women behind attempted to steer her through the ceremony. Suddenly the *papas* turned round, and placed the napkin across the heads of the couple, and on the napkin the two withered wreaths, accompanying that part of the ceremony with certain functions, presumably religious, but which, from his careless and indifferent manner of performing them, had an irreverent and ridiculous appearance. Three times did the *papas* make the circuit of the desks singing, and followed by Luka and his bride, who with considerable difficulty, as their heights were somewhat uneven, balanced the napkin and wreaths on their heads, the godmother and witnesses supporting the girl, and urging her gently forward. Then he whipped the napkin and wreaths off their heads, and, without waiting a moment, the bridegroom disappeared with his friends and was no more seen, leaving his bride standing with face unveiled, eyes cast down, hands folded in front, and toes together. Instantly she was seized by her godmother, her head was once more muffled in the red silk wrapping, and she was conducted to the door, where the old white horse,

gaily caparisoned in red and gold, was awaiting her. Once more the six friends unfolded the white cloth and screened the horse and bride with it. Two of her nearest relatives then seized the girl and put her astride of the horse, immediately pulling her half off again, and leaving her for a few seconds with one leg dangling across the easy-going animal's back. This part of the ceremony symbolised the submission which every good wife ought to show to her husband. In another moment they righted her, and settled her firmly in the saddle, and then, preceded by boys and men singing and dancing, and followed by a crowd of relatives and lookers-on, she set off for her future home. The bridle was held by a relation, and at her side walked the godfather, who pushed her head down at every cross-road, for, as she was tied up in crimson silk, she could see next to nothing, and it would be a terrible and unlucky thing to omit to salute the deities of the cross-roads on her way to her new home, a married life of misery being the inevitable result of such neglect. And so they wound slowly through the streets to the husband's house, where the bridal feasting and merry-making took place, the singers chanting the hymn of welcome:

"The bride is on her way.
She is like a budding flower!

The bride is in the gateway.
  She is a flower of sweet scent!
The bride is in the courtyard.
  She is like a full-blown flower!
The bride is on the staircase,
  Her face is like a flower!
The bride is in the hall.
  Her neck is like a lily!
The bride has entered the chamber.
  Do not shed tears!
And if I shed tears,
  It is because I shall go
No more to my father's house."

Nowadays the religious part of the marriage ceremony is performed in church, but formerly, when neither Latins nor Orthodox were allowed any place of worship in the city, the bride and her relations went in procession straight to the bridegroom's house, where the rites of marriage were gone through before a little altar erected in the guest-chamber. In those days the Latins worshipped in a large field, in the middle of which was an altar of plain boards, with a light roof over it. Here the Roman Catholic townsmen and Christian mountaineers assembled in rain, wind, and storm, or burning summer heat, kneeling on the bare ground, and with no roof over their heads. The Orthodox families, though few in number, were much better off, for they had a little chapel and burying-ground on the slopes of Mount Tarabosh, on the other side of the Boiana. About the time of the Crimean War, a firman

authorising the construction of a Roman Catholic cathedral was granted by the Sultan, but the Pasha refused to read it, and it was not until 1858 that Abdi Pasha, the then Governor-General, consented to publish the firman, and was even anxious to be present in person at the ceremony of the consecration. In a very few years both Roman Catholics and Orthodox had their churches and schools, and as a consequence, the bride was only received at her husband's house after the marriage had taken place in the church.

At his marriage Luka had no house of his own, for he and his father were poor men, and had passed all their lives as servants or retainers of Gasparo Musciani, one of the principal Christian merchants of the town, and it was at the house of their patron that the wedding festivities were to take place. As M. Ladislas and I picked our way down the narrow lane bordered with high hedges of the wait-a-bit thorn, that led to the house, we heard the songs and shouts of the bridal party approaching in the opposite direction. Soon the old white horse came in sight, the bride perched on high, and clutching with both hands at the high peak of the saddle in front of her, the lofty arrangement of crown and veil on her head nodding portentously as the animal she bestrode stumbled and floundered in the deep ruts and

water-courses of the narrow lane. Presently they all filed in through the gateway into the great courtyard, the singers singing and the dancers dancing with renewed vigour as an end to their efforts approached, and the ódour of dinner made itself sensible. The balcony was crowded with women and girls who had not been to the ceremony, and the procession halted before the wooden staircase leading to the first floor, which as usual was the only inhabited part of the house. The bride was once more seized and dragged off the horse. Two old women took her, one under each arm, and two more pushed behind, and in this fashion, still veiled and still reluctant, she was hauled up the staircase, across the balcony, and into the large square room on the left-hand side, which Musciani had given over to the newly-wedded pair. She disappeared through the doorway, followed by every woman and girl in the house, and only the men were left outside on the balcony. As for Luka, he had never shown himself at all, and had seemingly taken less interest in his wedding than the smallest and most open-mouthed boy in the establishment. The house was situated beyond the Roman Catholic Cathedral on the outskirts of the Christian quarter, near the bed of the Kiri, having a huge courtyard in front of it, and an extensive garden behind. It was an imposing structure,

with two wings, containing one room apiece, stretching out into the courtyard, and all along its front ran a wide open balcony, out of which opened the doors leading to the inner rooms. All the dwelling-rooms were on the first floor, the ground floor being devoted to stables, cellars, and what we should consider outhouses.

The preparations for feasting the entire crowd of relations, friends, and guests were being rapidly pressed forward. All the women were in the inner chamber, only a stray and hurried matron shuffling occasionally across the balcony, where the men were lounging about cracking native jokes, and putting an edge on their already healthy appetites with cigarettes and tiny glasses of raki. Soon a plentiful meal was served for the women in the mysterious seclusion of the bride's chamber, but the poor girl in whose honour the feast was given had to fulfil the conditions of a tedious etiquette even at dinner. She was permitted to sit down, it is true, but to show her good breeding she only ate when she was forced, as grief at leaving her father's house was presumed to have taken away her appetite. Moreover, she had a large veil thrown over her head, in order that the guests might not see her eat; being bound to maintain an exaggerated appearance of modesty and timidity all through the lengthy ceremonies of marriage, under

pain of being considered a shameless and abandoned woman.

Outside on the balcony or in the room in the left wing of the house all was laughter and merriment. The men were squatting on the floor round low wooden tables, on which were whole roast lambs or quarters of sheep. Plates and napkins were at a discount; each man, drawing his dagger or jack-knife, attacked the steaming mass of flesh before him, and selected for himself the portions he most relished, washing down the great lumps of mutton with copious libations of raki and red wine. When even an Albanian appetite could stand no more mutton, the little wooden tables were taken away, and huge flat tin dishes full of sweets brought in. A very favourite *halwar* consisted of light puffy cakes smothered in honey. These were served piled up in a vast pyramid on a tin dish, and placed in the centre of each group of men. Each guest plunged his hand into the mass, seized a cake, scooped up the honey at the edge of the dish, and swallowed it almost at a gulp, and in an incredibly short space of time the whole pile had disappeared. The Albanian, like the Turk, has a sweet tooth, and when he eats honey, cakes, or any other horrible confection he stands no half measures, but disposes of huge platefuls of such surpassing sweetness that the ordinary palate is

afflicted with an unquenchable thirst and a loathing for sugar in any shape or form for some time after tasting them. When the solid part of the feast was over, the raki circulated with fresh vigour, acquaintances shouted uncouth good healths to one another across the room, and the air grew heavy with the thin blue smoke of cigarettes. Every one was on the best of terms with his neighbours, and none of those quarrels took place which have been known to arise during a wedding feast. A year or two previously my bootmaker took it into his head to get married, and as the guests were drinking in the afternoon, a well-known bully of the town made his way in, and joined the party unasked. He soon became quarrelsome, and challenged a Christian near him to fight. The latter refused, so the bully drew his pistols and shot the other in the belt, which, being of metal, turned the ball. He was just going to fire again, when one of the guests seized the pistol, and in so doing got shot through the hand for his pains. The patience of the others being then exhausted, they rose up and put the free shooter forcibly out of the door. The wounded man's hand was bound up, and the feast proceeded as before the interruption. Happily no such untoward incident disturbed the tranquillity of Luka's wedding; all pistols and yataghans were hung on

the wall outside, it being a grave breach of etiquette to sit down to dinner with arms in the belt.

For M. Ladislas and myself, being honoured guests, a table, with cloth and napkins, was spread quite *alla franca* in a room on the opposite side of the house. Our host and his nephew joined us, and we sat on chairs and ate off plates with knives and forks, in the European fashion. We had not seen Luka since he disappeared so suddenly from the church, but he turned up from somewhere or other below to wait upon us, and insisted upon doing so, in spite of my remonstrances with him, for it seemed only natural that he should want to join his friends and guests at their dinner.

When we arrived at the house the day was fine and bright, but a dark bank of clouds showed through the trees on the horizon above the sea. Changes of weather were rapid in those mountainous districts, and hardly had we sat down to dinner when the sky got overcast, and a thunderstorm burst upon us in all its fury. It can hardly be said to rain in Albania; it is more like the bursting of a waterspout. Heavy black clouds came driving up from the Adriatic, struck against the tops of the mountains above the lake, and rolled down their steep rocky sides in dense masses of vapour upon the low land between the three

rivers and the lake. A cold wind blew in from the sea with a long hollow moan, and minarets, trees, and houses were blotted out from view by the rolling clouds. Then the rain dashed against the window in great sheets of water, as if some one were playing a garden hose upon the glass, for the clouds seemed to dissolve bodily as they passed, and not merely to pour down rain from above. Though only a little past midday it was pitch dark, save for the blinding flashes of lightning that played almost incessantly round the house, followed instantly by deafening crashes of thunder. Luka at once, and as a matter of course, lighted a lamp, for it was impossible to dine comfortably by the brilliant though uncertain glare of the lightning flashes, and, so far, the storm showed no sign of abating. Old Musciani looked very glum, and shook his head frequently in a most Lord Burleigh-like fashion, and at last, begging us to excuse him, went out into the verandah. In a minute he returned and said, "Signori, you are my prisoners." We jumped up and went out, and at once realised the meaning of our host's words. The courtyard was full of water, and two or three of the servants were paddling about up to their knees in muddy water, with rain descending in torrents on their heads, making frantic dashes after wooden boxes, dishes, and tubs that were being

whirled past on the rush of the stream. The storm beat fiercely into the verandah, and every flash of lightning revealed half a dozen more household articles that had been floated out from the ground floor, and were now spinning wildly round the courtyard in the endeavour to find a way out to join the flood rushing down to the sea. Musciani looked on with his hands deep in his coat pockets, and said but one word, "Kiri." That eccentric river, which completely dries up in summer time, had for some weeks past been overflowing its shallow banks, and this sudden storm had sent down such a freshet from the Great Mountains that the whole of the Christian quarter of Scodra was a couple of feet under water. There was nothing to be done, so we returned to our dinner feeling deeply grateful that the customs of the country did not sanction the arrangement of a dining-room on the ground floor. Slowly the storm drew off into the mountains, the flashes became dimmer and more intermittent, the thunder growled away in a deep bass over the distant crags, the clouds broke, and Luka put out the lamp.

After dinner we went out to hear the native singers and musicians, who were hard at work entertaining the men in the room where they dined. Our entry put rather a damper on the festivities;

the youth who had been dancing retired bashfully into a corner; the singer took up a cigarette and left off the long-drawn wail that passes for cheerful music in Albania; only the musicians, squatted cross-legged on the floor, took no notice of our arrival, and continued the plaintive and monotonous air. One of them was playing the *Guzla*, a native mandoline, made of thin light wood with two double strings of fine wire. This is not touched with the fingers, but with a quill or plectrum of cherry bark and produces a quaint tinkling sound that harmonises very well with the fiddle it accompanies. The fiddler, an old man with huge tin-rimmed spectacles on his nose, held his instrument upright on his knee, with the strings turned from him, and sawed away with his bow without taking the slightest notice of anybody else, while the third musician, a solemn youth with a long pale face, banged a tambourine on his wrist and knuckles with a grave energy that was quite touching.

Presently the host came in, and asked us if we would "honour" the bride with a visit. The door of the bridal chamber was thrown open, and we entered. In one corner stood the bride, supported by two old women, dressed just as we had seen her in church, but with her veil thrown back, and strings of silver-gilt coins all over her head and breast. Round the room women of every age

were squatting three deep on the floor. All rose at our entry, and stared at us with open-eyed interest, for to most of them there was a delicious piquancy in being in the same room with a Frank; while Gasparo Musciani—short, stout and ruddy, with both his hands and half his *chibouq* thrust deep into the pockets in the heavy flaps of his long, scarlet coat—strutted about in the centre of the room, like an elderly bantam cock among his hens. The mistress of the house brought a couple of chairs, and placed them just in front of the bride, begging us to be seated. As we sat down side by side, about a yard in front of Luka's wife, I felt that we must look ridiculously like two doctors examining a patient; but there we were, so we assumed the most dignified air we could, and gradually the women settled down into their old positions on the floor, all but the poor bride. She was a pleasant-faced girl, but looked very tired; and no wonder, for since early dawn she had not sat down for more than two minutes together, except during a hasty dinner, and when she was clutching, with frightened grasp, at the high-peaked saddle on the old white horse. We instantly rose, and declared we would not sit while the bride stood; and, as we were obdurate to all persuasion, the poor wearied girl got a little repose. Every time she started up we did the

same, and every one in the room perforce followed our example, as it would have been insulting for them to sit while we stood; so that our visit must have been a great relief to the bride from standing stock still and silent in a corner, with eyes downcast and folded hands, while every other woman in the room was chattering at the top of her voice. We wished her long life and happiness, and then, putting our presents—a gold coin apiece to add to the collection round her neck—into her hands, we left the room and went out into the verandah.

We had intended going home, but, as the water was now waist-deep in the yard, we agreed that we might as well see the ceremonies out. In the courtyard a couple of men and a maid-servant were struggling across the flood to rescue the family pig, which was in danger of being drowned in his sty by the gate. The three rescuers splashed up the rickety ladder that led to the pig's abode, for he, too, was not housed on a level with the ground, and, after a prolonged struggle and a series of protesting grunts, one of the men emerged with the pig clasped in his arms, and began to descend the ladder. At the sight of the flood, which was just beginning to enter the sty, the captive's struggles redoubled, and both man and pig pitched headlong into the water. Albanian

imprecations and swinish squeals mingled with the shouts of laughter from the balcony, where all the wedding guests were assembled; but by that time half a dozen more men had waded out, and the pig was rescued from his involuntary bath, every available part of his body that yielded a firm grip being seized hold of, and so, struggling and grunting, he was borne aloft into a place of safety.

The afternoon wore slowly away, and then after supper, by the light of pieces of *chopino*, or resinous pine, the Albanian wedding dance was performed. The men and women formed up in two lines opposite one another in the balcony, with their arms round each other's necks, and first the line of men danced slowly forward to meet the women, singing the monotonous marriage hymn. As the men retired the women danced forward after them singing the next verse, and so the two lines continued swaying backwards and forwards, chanting their epithalmium for half an hour.

M. Ladislas and I passed the night in the room where we dined, sleeping *all' Albanese* on mattresses spread on the floor. Some few of the guests had taken off their shoes, tucked up their trousers, and paddled home, but the greater number still remained. The women were stowed away in the inner rooms,

but the men spent the night on the balcony, singing and drinking, and watching the storm which came on again during the evening. The next morning, friends, having learnt where we were, sent horses for us, and I arrived home to find my garden in a swamp, and poor Simon in despair, as the flood had washed all the charcoal away and left a foot of evil-smelling mud in its place.

About a fortnight later on I found in my plate at breakfast time two or three embroidered napkins, and on my inquiring of Luka how they came there, he replied that his wife had worked them, and hoped I would do her the honour to accept them. He blushed painfully as he gave me the message, for he could not get over the idea that his bride and his marriage were very shocking subjects to talk about.

# XIV

## THE STORY OF ALBANIA

It is impossible to understand a race or a nation without knowing something of its history. The Albanians have been unfortunate in being a voiceless people, overshadowed and surrounded by races which have not been backward in making their wrongs and supposed rights known to Europe.

Bismarck, with his brutal disregard of facts which did not suit him, asserted at the Berlin Congress in 1878, "There is no Albanian nationality." The Albanian League, even while he was speaking, proved that he was wrong, and now, more than thirty-five years later, when the work which the Congress of necessity left unfinished has to be taken another step towards its logical end, the Albanian nation provides one of the most serious of the questions to be solved by the Court of the Great Peoples. Fortunately for Europe the agreement of the Powers was so overwhelming in its unanimity that Servia, the one

Balkan state which ventured to proceed on the lines of Prince Bismarck's mistaken dictum, was forced to withdraw her pretensions. Since the spring of last year there has been no questioning the decision that Albania is to be autonomous; the further questions, what is to be the exact status of the new King, and what are to be the exact boundaries of the new-comer into the European circle, are matters of detail which were reserved for discussion by the Great Powers. The central and important fact is that Albanian nationality has been recognised by the European conscience and that civilisation has been spared a Twentieth Century Poland.

Between the Albanian and the Slav there stand centuries of hatred and blood-feud. The Albanian regards the Slav as an intruder and a robber; the Slav looks on the Albanian as an inconvenient person who, though occasionally beaten, has always refused to be conquered; and, having the inestimable advantage of being more skilled in literature, he has consistently represented the silent Albanian as a brigand and a plunderer of Slav villages. As a matter of history the boot is on the other leg. Setting aside the fact that both Albanian and Slav can be, and are, brigands on occasion, the Albanian and his kindred had been for centuries quarrelling comfortably among

themselves when the Slav hordes poured across the Danube, and drove the old inhabitants by sheer weight of numbers from the plains to the uplands, and from the uplands to the mountains. Among the inaccessible crags on the western side of the Balkan peninsula facing the Adriatic Sea, the remnants of the old autocthonous peoples of Illyria, Epirus, Macedonia and Thrace, have for centuries held their own against the recurring floods of Kelts, Goths, Serbs, Bulgars and Turks. Like the Montenegrins who hold the northern part of their mountains, the Albanians have been defeated, and have seen their villages burned and their families massacred, but they have never been really conquered. The only difference is that while the Albanians had been defending their fastnesses for many generations before the Slavs of Montenegro came south of the Danube, they have never had the good fortune, or it may be the intelligence, to acquire a really powerful literary advertiser. Even Lord Byron passed them over in favour of the Greeks, though he credited the "wild Albanian kirtled to his knee" with never having shown an enemy his back or broken his faith to a guest. It is unlikely that the liberation of Greece would have been obtained had it not been for the Albanian warriors who supplied the best fighting

material for the insurrection. Admiral Miaoulis, the Botzaris, the Boulgaris and many other heroes of the beginning of the last century were Albanians or of Albanian extraction, but the modern Greek lives on the literary achievements of the ancient Hellenes, while the strong men of Albania, like their ancestors who lived before Agamemnon, are relegated to obscurity because they have no one to focus the gaze of Europe upon them.

Byron, Finlay and a hundred others did their best to make Europe believe that the modern Greek is the true descendant of the ancient Hellene, but none of them ever gave the Albanian the credit due to him. Then the fashion changed; the Slav came to the front, and Mr. Gladstone, Lord Tennyson with his Montenegrin sonnet, Miss Irby of Serajevo and a host of writers came forward to extol the Serb and the less sympathetic but still Slavised Bulgar; with the result that the average man believes that the Slavs were the original owners of the Balkan peninsula, and that the Turks took it from them at the battle of Kossovo in 1389. The Albanian, proud and silent on his crags, without even a disastrous battle to serve as a peg for advertisement, has through the centuries asked nothing of Europe and has been given it in ample measure. Perhaps the Greeks did not live up to the glory that was

expected of them, and so slipped into the background, but it is certain that the Slavs came to the front in the mid-Victorian days, and by 1880 were the pampered children of hysterical Europe. The Slavised Bulgar is a dour, hard-working man, self-centred and unpolished, and it was a little difficult to keep up the enthusiasm on his behalf to fever heat. But the Serb is outwardly a pleasant and picturesque creature with a keen sense of dramatic values. Constantine, the last of the Byzantine Emperors, fell even more dramatically at Constantinople than did Lazar, the last Serbian Czar, at Kossovopolje, but the national mourning for the black day of Kossovo seems to have struck the imagination of Europe, while the historically far more important death of Constantine Palæologus inside the gate of St. Romanus on May 29th, 1453, has left it untouched.

The Serb is sympathetic in the passive sense of the word; he attracts people with his easy philosophy and his careless way of treating and looking at life. The modern Bulgar does not attract; he inspires respect, perhaps, but not affection. In racial characteristics the Serbs are akin to the western Irish, and the Bulgarians to the lowland Scotch; and the more plausible man naturally makes the more favourable impression on the passing observer. So it is that writers on the Balkans often

unwittingly inspire their untravelled readers with the notion that the Serbs, now represented by the Servians and Montenegrins, were the original owners of the Balkans, but shared the eastern part with the Bulgars, while the Turks were intruders who unjustly seized the country and are now justly surrendering it to the rightful possessors. In reality, the Albanians, or Shkypetars as they are properly called, represent the original owners of the peninsula, for the Serbs did not cross the Danube until about 550 A.D., nor the Bulgars till 679 A.D., when the Shkypetars had enjoyed over eleven hundred years' possession of the land, enlivened by petty tribal fights, battles with or under the Macedonian kings, and struggles with Rome. In every town and district which the Slavs can claim by right of conquest under some nebulous and transitory Empire, the Albanians can oppose the title of original ownership of the soil, from ages when neither history nor the Slavs were known in the Balkans. The Romans, unlike most of the invaders who came after them, were administrators, and a province was usually the better for their rule. The Thrako-Illyrian tribes, now represented by the Shkypetars or Albanians, were however not seriously disturbed by the Roman governors and colonists, or rather they were neglected and allowed to lapse into a state of

lethargy from the turbulent sort of civilisation to which their own kings had raised them. The Romans policed but did not open up the country. But when the Slavs and the Bulgars swept over the land like a swarm of locusts, the original inhabitants were either exterminated or fled to the mountains, where they led a fighting existence against what was termed authority but which to their minds was the tyranny of the supplanter and usurper. The five hundred years' struggle of Montenegro against the Turks has often been told in enthusiastic language. The more than a thousand years' struggle of the Shkypetars against the Slav and the Turk has always been passed over as an incident of no importance.

The very name "Albanian" lends itself to prejudice. To the Western European it recalls the travellers' tales of Albanian brigands, and the stories about the Sultan Abdul Hamid's guards. The name sounds, and is, modern, whereas Serb, as admirers of the modern Servians very wisely write the word, has an ancient flavour. The tribes that are now known as Albanian do not recognise themselves by that name. They are Shkypetars, the Sons of the Mountain Eagle, and their country is Shkyperi or Shkypeni, the Land of the Mountain Eagle. They have a legend that Pyrrhus, when told by his troops that his

movements in war were as rapid as the swoop of an eagle, replied that it was true because his soldiers were Sons of the Eagle and their lances were the pinions upon which he flew. If this story had any foundation in fact, it goes to show that the name Shkypetar was known to, or adopted by, the people and their king about 300 B.C., and one can only marvel at the modesty which dates the name no further back. At any rate, Pyrrhus, the greatest soldier of his age, was a Shkypetar or Albanian, and beside him the Czar Dushan is a modern and an interloper. The name Albania was not heard of until the end of the eleventh century when the Normans under Robert Guiscard, after defeating the Emperor Alexius Comnenus at Durazzo, marched to Elbassan, then called Albanopolis, and finding the native name too difficult for their tongues, styled the country of which Albanopolis is the chief town by the easy term "Albania." The word, which does not appear to have been used officially until the first half of the fourteenth century, properly designates the land on the western side of the Caspian Sea, and much confusion has arisen from the Norman incapacity to wrestle with the word Shkypetar. Many educated Albanians claim that they are descended from the Pelasgi, but this is combated by some European authorities. As we know next to nothing about

the Pelasgi, the question resolves itself into a matter of speculation incapable of proof either way, but at any rate it is certain that the Shkypetars are the descendants of those Thrako-Illyrian tribes which, by whatever name they were called by Greek writers, occupied the country to the north of Hellas when history was emerging out of legend.

The earliest known king of Illyria is said to be Hyllus, who died in B.C. 1225. Under his grandson Daunius the land was invaded by the Liburnians, who fled from Asia after the fall of Troy. The Liburnians occupied the coast of Dalmatia and the islands from Corfu northwards, and gradually became absorbed in the population. Only North Albania was included in Illyria, which stretched north over Montenegro, the Herzegovina and Dalmatia. South Albania was known as Epirus, and this division of the country makes the selection of the historical facts relating to Albania as a whole, more than usually difficult. But it is easy to guess that the centuries as they pass saw continual tribal fights between the Illyrians, the Epirots, the Macedonians and the other Thrako-Illyrian peoples, and about 600 B.C. came the first of the great invasions of which we have any clear knowledge. The history of the Balkan peninsula has always alternated at longer or shorter intervals between local quarrels and huge incursions of

barbarians who swept across the land and submerged the plains, but left the mountains unsubdued. It is in these mountains that Albanian history principally lies, for while the people of the lowlands absorbed or were absorbed by the invaders, the older races fled to the mountains and preserved intact their primitive language and customs. The Kelts were the first barbarian invaders and, as was usual in such incursions as distinct from widespread racial immigrations, they were probably a small body of fighting men with their wives and children, who were soon lost in the mass of the people among whom they settled. They were absorbed in the Illyrian kingdom of which Scodra or Scutari was the capital and, like the Liburnians whom they supplanted at sea, they gained fame and wealth as pirates in the Adriatic and even in the Mediterranean. In the first half of the fourth century B.C. Bardyles, the king of Illyria, conquered Epirus and a good part of Macedonia, but he was defeated and driven back to his mountains by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. A little later Alexander the king of the Molossi in South Albania made an expedition into Italy, and so brought Rome into contact with the opposite shores of the Adriatic. All these petty kingdoms were evidently merely subdivisions of the same race, and were closely connected with

one another. The sister of Alexander, king of the Molossi, was the mother of Alexander the Great; the men who marched to Babylon, Persia and India were the ancestors of the Albanians; and Epirus and Illyria shared in the anarchy which followed the death of the great conqueror, who has himself been claimed as a Shkypetar, and with considerable justice.

Towards the close of the third century B.C. Agron emerged from the welter as king of Bardyles' old realm and also of Epirus. Like his kinsman Alexander the Great he was a first-rate fighting man, and like him he died after a debauch, and left an infant son to succeed him. But he differed from the hero in leaving also a widow, Teuta, who was a lady of much character. She is said to have stretched a chain across the river Boiana where two hills shut in the stream above the village of Reci, and to have levied a toll on all ships going up and down. The Albanians say that the rings to which she fastened her chains are still to be seen in the rocks. Moreover she raised an army, built a fleet, and with less than modern Albanian caution set out to capture the island of Issa (now Lissa) which happened to be in alliance with the Romans. The republic sent an embassy to Teuta, but she slew one of the envoys and defiantly attacked Durazzo and Corfu. The

Romans thereupon turned their arms to the Illyrian coast and made short work of Teuta. She was driven from all the places she had occupied, even from her capital Scodra, and had to accept an ignominious peace. In spite of this the Illyrian Shkypetars had not learned their lesson, nor realised the growing power of Rome. Demetrius of Pharos, who succeeded Teuta as ruler of the country and guardian of Agron's son, although he owed much to Rome, began to rob and pillage the allies of the republic, and endeavoured to unite the Shkypetar States in one alliance. He failed, and the lands of the Shkypetar fell under the power of the Romans, who contented themselves with exercising a protectorate over the realm of the young king Pinnes. The three Shkypetar States, Illyria, Epirus and Macedonia, rose against Rome under Philip of Macedon when Hannibal seemed in a fair way to crush the republic, only a small portion of what is now Albania south of the Drin remaining faithful to its engagements.

When the Carthaginian danger had been disposed of, Rome once more turned to the lands across the Adriatic. Gentius, the last king in Scodra, had allied himself with Perseus of Macedon and had returned to the Adriatic piracy of his ancestors. Thirty days saw the fall of the Northern Shkyperi kingdom. The praetor Amicius

in B.C. 168 landed on the coast and drove Gentius into Scodra, where the king soon afterwards surrendered at discretion, and was taken with his wife, his two sons and his brother to grace the triumph of Rome. Perseus was utterly defeated by the Consul Paullus at Pydna shortly afterwards, and all the lands of the Shkypetar became incorporated in the Roman Empire. Epirus in particular was severely punished, and the prosperity of the country which hitherto had been considerable, was completely ruined. The Shkypetars took to their mountains, and the Romans did nothing to restore the wealth and culture of the times of the native kings. The cities, even Scodra, fell into decay, and when Augustus founded Nicopolis on the north of the Gulf of Arta in commemoration of the battle of Actium, there was not a single city of any importance in Epirus or Illyria. Nicopolis itself did not last long, for under Honorius it had become the property of a Greek lady, and when Alaric and his Goths in the fifth century overran Illyria and Epirus, the city was sacked, and from that time ceased to be a place of any note. Under the Empire the deserted country was divided between the provinces of Illyria and Epirus, North Albania being the southern portion of Illyria. When the Roman Empire was divided in A.D. 395, the Shkypetars

were allotted to the Eastern Empire, and the country was known as Praevalitana, with Scodra for its capital. The condition of the land must have been very much what it was under the Turks. The prefects of the Empire ruled on the coast and in the plains, but in the mountains the Shkypetars enjoyed semi-independence, and as a consequence of this neglect the country remained more or less derelict. But the Shkypetars were unquestionably the owners of the soil under the Imperial rule of Constantinople.

In the fifth century came the first of the great invasions under which the Empire of Byzantium was finally to disappear. The rebel Goths under Alaric, after invading Greece, swung north and ravaged Epirus and Illyria, provinces which they had so far neglected owing to the poverty of the land since the occupation by the Romans. When the Goths invaded Italy, Shkyperi enjoyed a period of comparative tranquillity under Justinian, and until the coming of the Slavs. The Huns and the Avars were passing invaders; they did not settle on the land, but they drove the Thrako-Illyrian tribes, who spoke both Latin and Shkypetar, into the mountains, and left the way open for the Slavs. It was at the end of the sixth century that the Slav tribes, who had crossed the Danube in scattered bodies some three

hundred years previously, came in overwhelming numbers to settle, and the lowlands were ravaged and occupied by them sometimes alone, and sometimes in conjunction with the Avars. The Thrako-Illyrians were at that time like the Romanised Britons; they had become enervated under the Pax Romana and were unable to resist the ruthless invaders. They fled into the mountains of Albania, and there they gradually dropped the Latin language and the veneer of Roman civilisation. They were men who had to fight for their lives; the weaklings died off, and the old tongue and the old customs of the Shkypetars were once more resumed. The Serb, though a plausible and soft-spoken individual when he has got the upper hand, is at heart a savage, and the Thrako-Illyrians who were driven out of Thrace and Macedonia to the highlands of Epirus, and Southern Illyria were the sterner remnants of a population which had seen old men, women and children massacred, and homesteads burned by the invaders. Then began that undying hatred between the Shkypetar and the Serb which is bitter even to-day, for the Albanian still looks on the Slav as the intruder and the destroyer of house and home. This explains why the modern Albanian has always been more friendly with the Moslem Turk than with the Christian

Slav. The brutalities committed by the Turks were trifles compared with the atrocities of the Slav.

In the first half of the seventh century the Slavs were recognised officially by the Empire. Heraclius persuaded them to turn their arms against the Avars, and after that they held the lands they had seized in fief of the Byzantine Empire, but governed by their own Zhupans. The Thrako-Illyrian Shkypetars were thenceforward confined to the mountains of what is now Albania, the Slavs occupying what are now Servia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, with Ragusa as their capital. The next intruders into the Balkan peninsula were the Bulgars, an Asiatic race who crossed from Bessarabia at the end of the seventh century. They were a people akin to the Turks who were to come after them, and like the Turks they were principally a fighting race. But, whereas the Turks have always stood alone and apart in Europe, the Bulgars became Slavised and adopted the speech and manners of the people they turned out of the eastern lands of the peninsula. They adopted Christianity in 864 under Boris, who like his namesake of to-day was converted, and under his successor Simeon about 900 A.D., they founded one of those ephemeral "empires" of the Balkans which sprang

up like mushrooms alongside the more lasting and dignified Roman Empire at Byzantium. Simeon's rule extended right across the north of the Balkan peninsula, and displaced that of the Serbs who were brought under his rule. The Shkypetars were included in the Bulgarian Empire, but as before it was only the plains and not the mountains which were held by the conquerors. Simeon's rule, though he vauntingly took the title of Czar or Cæsar, was merely nominal in the West, and when he died in A.D. 927 his empire went to pieces. Shishman and his son Samuel, however, kept the West independent of Byzantium with their capital at Ochrida, and probably the reign of the Czar Simeon was the period when the Shkypetars were most nearly subjugated by the Slav or Slavised intruders. But in 1018 the Empire of Simeon was utterly crushed by the Emperor Basil Bulgaroktonos, and Albania again passed under the nominal sway of Byzantium, while Bulgars and Serbs were ruled direct from the Imperial Court.

In turn the spurt of energy from Constantinople died down, for equally with the Bulgarian and Serbian hegemonies, it depended on the life of one man. A new leader arose in Bulgaria, John Asen, who claimed to be descended from Shishman. He rebelled successfully against the Empire, and,

after his murder, under his successors and especially John Asen II., Albania was contained in the second Bulgarian Empire. Nominally the Shkypetars passed from the Empire to the Bulgars, and from the Bulgars to the Serbs, and back again at every shifting of the kaleidoscope, but the hold of all the Empires was too ephemeral to allow of a costly conquest of the barren mountains. When either the Emperor or the Slavs gained decidedly the upper hand, the plains and towns of Shkyperi fell under the conqueror, but in the feeble intervals the plains and at all times the mountains were in the hands of that unsubdued remnant of the ancient inhabitants—the Shkypetars. John Asen died in 1241 A.D., and the leadership of the Balkan Slavs began to pass to the Serbs under the Nemanja dynasty, who first called themselves Kings and afterwards Czars of Serbia. The Stefans of Serbia fought with the Palaeologi Emperors and with the Bulgarians, the Bulgarian army being crushed at the battle of Velbuzhd on June 28th, 1330. The North Albanians remained more or less independent while all these quarrels were going on around them, but in the time of the Czar Dushan, the Strangler, A.D. 1336, they were included in his Empire. After the break-up of Dushan's kingdom, North Albania was ruled from Scodra by the Princes of the Balsha family of

Provence, who had taken service with the Serbian Czars. In 1368 the Prince became a Roman Catholic, and the North Albanian mountaineers have remained of that religion ever since. The Balshas greatly increased their dominions, but in 1383 George Balsha I. was defeated and killed by the Turks near Berat, and George Balsha II. gave Scodra and Durazzo to the Venetians in return for their assistance against the Turks. But the Venetians did not afford Balsha help of any value and the family retired to Montenegro and were succeeded in North Albania by the Castriot family of Croja, who were native-born Shkypetars and extended their rule over the whole of the country except the places held by Venice. South and Middle Albania were independent under the rule of the Despot of Epirus, Michael Angelus who though illegitimate, claimed to be the heir of the Emperors Isaac and Alexius Angelus. He raised the Albanian tribes, discomfited the Frankish Dukes of Thessalonica and Athens, and after his death his nephew, John Angelus, fought with John Dukas for the Empire of Byzantium, but was defeated in 1241 A.D. The heir of the Angel then retired to the Albanian mountains, and as Despots of Epirus the family ruled the country in spite of the Emperor for several years.

Meanwhile the last of the conquerors of the

Balkans were overrunning the peninsula. In 1354 the Turks were invited over to Thrace by John Cantacuzenus to help him against the Palaeologi. They seized and settled at Gallipoli, and in 1361 Sultan Murad I. took Adrianople. Servia was invaded, and crushed at Kossovopolje in 1389, where some Albanians under their Prince Balsha fought in the army of the Czar Lazar. The Sultan Murad II. advanced against Albania in 1423, and took among others the four sons of John Castriot of Croja as hostages. The youngest of these sons was George Castriot, the famous Scanderbeg, who was educated at Constantinople by the Sultan. In 1443 he rose against the Turks and seized Croja, and though army after army was sent against him he defeated many viziers and generals and the Sultan Murad himself. The bravery of the Albanians and the difficulties of the mountains made the leadership of Scanderbeg invincible, and even Mahomet II., the Conqueror, was beaten by the Albanian prince at Croja in 1465. But Scanderbeg was unable to get any help from Europe, and he died in 1467 leaving no worthy successor. Croja was taken by Mahomet II. in 1478, and the next year Scodra, Antivari and other towns on the coast were surrendered to the Turks by Venice. In the mountains the Albanians always had practical independence under the Turks, but

Scodra was at first governed by Turkish Pashas. At the beginning of the eighteenth century a Mahometan Albanian chief, Mehemet Bey of Bouchatti, a village just south of Scodra, seized the city and massacred his rivals. He was so powerful that the Porte thought it wise to make the Pashalik hereditary in his family, and he governed not only Scodra but also Alessio, Tiranna, Elbassan and the Dukadjin. Kara Mahmoud, his son, was quite an independent Prince. He twice invaded Montenegro and burned Cettigne, and defeated the Turkish troops at Kossovopolje, but in 1796 he was defeated and killed in Montenegro. His descendants ruled North Albania, and headed revolts in Bosnia and Servia, and fought against the Sultan with success. But after the Crimean War the Porte sent an army to Scodra, and the reign of the Moslem Albanian Pashas of Bouchatti came to an end. While the Pashas of Bouchatti were defying the Sultan in North Albania, Ali Pasha of Janina defeated them in the south. He united the South Albanians, but after a long and successful career, he was finally besieged in the castle of Janina and put to death in 1822. During the last half century the country has been governed from Constantinople, but though the towns were occupied by garrisons the mountaineers retained their arms, their independence

and their tribal laws and customs. The Albanian League, which was founded in 1878 under the leadership of Hodo Bey of Scodra and Prenck Bib Doda of Mirditia, united the Mahometans and Christians of North Albania to protest against the cession of Gussigne and Plava to Montenegro, and was successful to the extent of getting the Dulcigno district substituted for the mountain towns. In spite of the exile of Hodo Bey and Prenck Bib Doda the League has always had a subterranean existence directed against all enemies of Albanian nationality. Only in a less degree than Montenegro did Albania preserve its freedom from the Turkish rulers, and that was owing to the ease with which the plains and coast can be occupied by troops. The leading families among the Moslem Albanians have supplied a great number of civil and military officials to the Ottoman service, and these Pashas and Beys have proved themselves of the highest ability. There will be no lack of capable rulers now the new state is constituted.

The Shkypetars have not only preserved their mountain homes but also their language and their laws. Albanian, to give it the modern name, is a very ancient Aryan tongue which was spoken by the Balkan tribes before the time of Alexander the Great. It is a non-Slavonic language, the Sla-

words used being simply additions made in comparatively modern times. In Old Serbia and on the borders of Montenegro the Albanians have mixed and intermarried with the Slavs, but they have only adopted a few words of Servian and not the entire language. In the south a similar process has taken place. Albanian is certainly related to Greek, and it has borrowed many words, especially among the tribes along the border, so that the purest Albanian is to be found in the mountains of Roman Catholic Mirditia and among the Mussulman families in the south of Central Albania. So much is this the case that the tribes on the Montenegrin border find some difficulty in understanding those in the districts marching with Greece. About one-third of the language is made up of words taken from Keltic, Teutonic, Latin and Slav owing to the invasions from which the Shkypetars have suffered; another third is Aeolic Greek of a very archaic form; and the remaining third is unknown, but probably represents the tongue of the ancient Thrako-Illyrian tribes. Interesting speculations have been made as to the exact position of Albanian in the Aryan family, but it is absolutely agreed that it is a non-Slavonic tongue of great antiquity. It is an extraordinarily difficult language for a foreigner to speak, and the Shkypetars claim that none but the native born

## Ἀλφάβητον Ἀλβανικόν.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Α | α. | آ |
| Β | β. | و |
| Б | б ὡς τὸ Γαλλικὸν b· οἷον *bãri*, ὁ χόρτος. | ب |
| Γ | γ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. γ πρὸ τοῦ α, ο, καὶ ω· οἷον γάρθ, φραγμός. | غ |
| Ґ | ґ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. γ πρὸ τοῦ ε, η, καὶ ι· οἷον γάκ, αἷμα. | ك |
| Δ | δ. | د |
| D | *d* ὡς τὸ Γαλλικὸν d· οἷον *dέρα*, ἡ θύρα. | د |
| Ε | ε. | أ |
| Ę | ę ἐψιλὸν κλειστόν· οἷον κętέ, τοῦτο. | ه |
| Ζ | ζ. | ز |
| Ż | ż ὡς τὸ Γαλλικὸν j· οἷον ζαπί, εἶδος ὄφεως. | ژ |
| Θ | θ. | ث |
| Ι | ι. | ا |
| J | *j* ὡς τὸ Ἰταλικὸν j· οἷον *jάμ*, αἷμαι. | ى |
| Κ | κ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. κ πρὸ τοῦ α, ο, καὶ ω· οἷον κᾶλι, ὁ ἵππος. | ق |
| Ќ | ќ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. κ πρὸ τοῦ ε, η, καὶ ι· οἷον ќάφα, ὁ λαιμός. | ك |
| Λ | λ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. λ πρὸ τοῦ α, ο, καὶ ω· οἷον γέλα, τὸ φαγητόν. | ل |
| Ѧ | ѧ ὡς τὸ Ἑλλ. λ πρὸ τοῦ ε, η, καὶ ι· οἷον πέλα, ἡ φοράδα. | ل |
| Μ | μ. | م |
| Ν | ν. | ن |
| Ń | ń ὑγρότερον τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ν· οἷον ńέ, ἕν. | نى |
| Ο | ο. | و |
| Π | π. | پ |
| Ρ | ρ ὡς τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ρ· οἷον ρθ*aj*, φυλάττω. | ر |
| Ṛ | ṛ ὑγρότερον τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ρ· οἷον ṛθ*aj*, ξυρίζω. | رر |
| Σ | σ. | س |
| S̈ | s̈ ὡς τὸ Ἀγγλικὸν sh· οἷον s̈άρα, τὸ πριόνιον. | ش |
| Τ | τ. | ت |
| Ȣ | ȣ ὡς τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ου· οἷον ȣδα, ἡ ὁδός. | او |
| Υ | υ ὡς τὸ Γαλλικὸν u· οἷον ũλι, τὸ ἄστρον. | و |
| Φ | φ. | ف |
| Χ̇ | χ̇ βαθύτερον τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ χ· οἷον χ̇ᾶ, τρώγω. | ه |
| ΤΣ | τσ » τσȣ̈τσα, τὸ κοράσιον. | ت س |
| ΤS̈ | τs̈ » τs̈ȣ̈νι, τὸ παιδίον. | چ |
| DΣ | *dσ* » *dσίdσα*, ὁ σπινθήρ. | د س |
| DS̈ | *ds̈* » *ds̈όκα*, ἡ φλοκάτα. | ج |

Φωνήεντα βραχέα, ά έ ę́ í ó ȣ́ ú.
Φωνήεντα μακρά, ᾶ ē ę̄ ī ō ȣ̄ ū.

ALBANIAN ALPHABETS.

On the left adapted from Greek; on the right from Turkish. Roman letters are used in North Albania.

can pronounce their queer consonantal sounds correctly. The difficulty of learning the language is increased by the want of a suitable alphabet. The Jesuits and Franciscans of Scodra use the Latin alphabet; in the south the Orthodox priests use Greek letters. But neither system is satisfactory, and consequently some grammarians have introduced diacritical marks, or have mixed up the two sets of characters into one jumbled alphabet. Albanian has also been written in Turkish characters but probably with even less success, and it is a proof of the marvellous vitality of the language that it has survived through the ages without a literature, untaught and unwritten in the schools.

Except where they have intermingled with the Slavs and other races the Shkypetars are tall and fair. Those who have suffered from the poverty of the mountains have no pretensions to good looks, but the average mountaineer who belongs to a well-to-do tribe has an oval face with an aquiline nose, high cheek bones, blue-grey eyes, fair hair, and a long golden moustache. Their bodies are straight and slim and not so heavy as those of the Montenegrins. Even in the towns the Albanians seldom get fat but preserve their lithe, active figures all their lives. Some of the Mirdites might pass anywhere for Englishmen of the blonde type. The Shkypetars have always been divided into two

great families; the Ghegs in the north, and the Tosks in the south, the river Skumbi marking the boundary between them. No meaning has been found for the name Tosk, but Gheg is said to signify "giant," and in the fifteenth century it was used by the Turks as a sort of title for the ruling family of Mirditia. The North Albanians are divided into tribes or clans; those to the north being grouped under the designation of Malissori, or men of the Black Mountains, including the Clementi, Castrati, Hoti, Skreli and other tribes; those to the east including Shalla, Shoshi, Summa and others, collectively called Pulati or the Woodlanders; and the confederation of the Mirdites, who are Roman Catholics and governed by a chief of the Doda family. At the present moment their chief is Prenck Bib Doda Pasha, who was for many years an exile in Asia Minor for his share in the League. In South Albania the Tosks are divided into three principal groups, the Tosks, the Tchams and the Liapes, and they again are subdivided into tribes. In North Albania the Mirdites and most of the Malissori are Roman Catholics, and they are the descendants of the men who in 1320, after the Serbian Czars, at that time holding Scodra and the plain, had abandoned Catholicism and adopted Orthodoxy, refused to give up their allegiance to the Pope. The number of Orthodox in North

Albania is very small, and half the inhabitants of Scodra, many of the Malissori, a large proportion of the men of Pulati, and nearly all those round Prisrend, Jacova and Ipek are Moslems. In South Albania the townsmen and men of the plains are principally Moslems, except towards the Greek frontier where they are mostly Orthodox. An Albanian official reckons that nearly half of the one million eight hundred thousand inhabitants are Moslems; less than a third Orthodox, and the rest Roman Catholics. This is probably near the mark, but every statistician has his own figures and the reasons for them, though to a less degree than in Macedonia.

The Albanian territories between Antivari and Dulcigno were given to Montenegro in 1880 after an armed protest by the Albanian League, and ethnologically the lands of the Shkypetar now include Scodra and its plain, the mountains of the Malissori, Gussigne-Plava, Ipek, Jacova, Prisrend, Pulati, Mirditia and the country west of Lakes Ochrida and Janina as far as the Gulf of Arta. Round Prisrend there is a minority of Slavs, and in the south below Janina there is a large proportion of Greeks, but the limits here given contain all the territories left to the Shkypetar by the successive incursions into the Balkan peninsula of Slavs and Bulgars. Happily the

Servian attempt to ignore the Albanians and to represent Scodra, Durazzo and the plains near them as Slav because the Serbian Czars held them at intervals from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries, has failed, chiefly, it must be admitted, owing to the assertion by Austria-Hungary of her own interests, and not to any love for historical justice on the part of Europe. Except that they have not one chieftain over all the tribes, and have had a much wider extent of territory to defend against more numerous enemies, the case of Shkypetars is exactly parallel to that of the Montenegrins. The Montenegrins held their own for five hundred years in a little block of mountains against the Turks only; the Shkypetars have held their own for considerably over a thousand years against successive waves of Slavs, Bulgars and Turks. They have often been submerged, but they have always come to the surface again, and by their long and stubborn fight they have earned over and over again their right to the barren rocks, infrequent plains and insignificant harbours which go to make up their patrimony, or rather what is left of it. They are the last remnants of the oldest race in Europe, for they represent peoples who preceded the Greeks. They were deep-rooted in the soil of the Balkan peninsula ages before

the first Slav crossed the Danube, and if the Serb and the Bulgar have acquired a right to the lands from which they drove the ancient tribes, at least those original inhabitants have justified their claim to the rocks and shore from which no enemy, Slav, Bulgar or Turk, has been able to dislodge them.

# XV

## CUTTING OUT THE NEW KINGDOM

Out of the crucible which has been seething in the flames of the Balkan war the kingdoms of the peninsula have emerged aggrandised at the expense of Turkey, and have been quarrelling over the distribution of the spoil ever since. They were not allowed to cut up Albania altogether, and from the body which was left after the limbs had been lopped off to satisfy the Allies, Europe has begun the creation of a new state, the last of those which have been built out of the fragments of the Byzantine and Turkish Empires by modern diplomatists. Albania is being made into an autonomous state with all the blessings of parliamentary and bureaucratic government, with its own prince and system of elections all complete. This is the last state which can be manufactured out of the ancient material of Europe, unless, as some Slavs hold, Austria is to be partitioned in the future, but the nationality which is to compose it is so distinct and separate from the rest of Europe, and so unlike

that of the Slav races by which it is hemmed in, that its creation as an autonomous state is but the natural outcome of the logic of events. The future of Albania, this new-comer into the circle of European governments, will depend on the skill with which its boundaries are drawn. Expediency, and not strict justice, has always ruled the decisions of the Great Powers, who are the final Court of Appeal in such matters, but if a mistaken idea of what seems to be the easiest way is allowed to prevail, and if the land greed of the neighbouring states is permitted to supplant the natural and ethnical frontiers by boundaries inspired by earth-hunger, then the Near Eastern Question, so far from being settled, will only be shifted to another phase, and the Slav will stand out as the oppressor of nationalities in the Balkans in place of the Turk. The Albanian comes of the oldest race in Europe, he is the descendant of the original owners of the soil, and to him the Slav, just as much as the Turk, is an intruder and a supplanter. The Slav was only overrun by the Turk; the Albanian was overrun by the Slav in addition to the Turk, and the future of Europe's latest experiment in state building depends upon the recognition of this fact.

It is said that an ingenious man of science has succeeded in manufacturing an egg without the aid of the usual hen, but with the correct chemical

constituents and the familiar appearance. In every respect it is so exactly like an egg, and is so scientifically accurate in composition, that only the man who eats it doubts of its perfect success, and recognises that there is something more, something indefinable, in an egg which is beyond outward appearance and chemical components. This triumph of art over nature is known as the Synthetic Egg, and there is the gravest danger lest the egg which Europe is now endeavouring to produce should be of the Synthetic variety; a state in everything but that which makes a living state, the inclusion within its boundaries of all those of the nationality. Since for the sentimental satisfaction of memories of their evanescent empires of mediæval times, the Bulgar and the Serb have been allowed to lop off the fairest portions of the too meagre heritage of the Albanians, the new state runs the gravest risk of being addled from its inception. The unrest will smoulder in the Balkans ready to burst into a flame at any moment, for the Turk was the spasmodic but usually easy-going tyrant of the old school, whereas the Slav will be the tyrant of the new bureaucracy which cloaks its oppression under the pretence of legality. The Albanian who is left outside the border will be always struggling to join his brothers in the new state, and the story of the Macedonian risings will

be repeated over again, and with greater justification. The future of a "synthetic" and artificial Albania can be told in one word; bloodshed.

After the victorious march of the Bulgarians, Servians and Greeks through Thrace and Macedonia, the pretence that war was declared to free the brothers in Macedonia was abandoned for the frank confession of a desire for an extension of territory. There was no need to free Macedonia from the Turks—time was doing that—but each one of the three Allies hastened to save as much of it as he could from his two partners in the enterprise, for it was obvious to all of them that the Young Turks had given the final blow to the empire of Turkey in Europe. We heard nothing more of the absurd proposal to erect an autonomous Macedonia with a Prince and parliament of its own. The Allies at once partitioned it on paper, and the fury of the second Balkan War between the four Allies showed the lengths to which their land-hunger carried them. Europe definitely decided that there shall be a principality of Albania, and the Allies did not dare to give a point-blank refusal. But they drew an Albania on the map which would shut the Albanians in to the narrow mountains and the poorest strip of seaboard, and they advanced many plausible reasons, ethnological, geographical and historical, why the ancient race

should yield its towns and lowlands to the Slav and the Greek, and go starve on a ridge of sterile crags until a cheap process of extermination by hunger has made the time ripe for a final partition of the stony ground of an abortive principality. In any case, by the division of Macedonia, Albania will be shut in on the north and east by Slavs and on the south by Greece, and the scheme of the allies was to draw the boundaries so close that she would be strangled from the start.

There were three Albanias in the market for Europe to choose from, and it is well to note what they were. First there was the scheme of the Provisional Government of Albania under Ismail Kemal Bey of Avlona, which demanded all the lands in the west of the Balkan peninsula that are inhabited by a majority of Albanians and were till recently under the rule of the Sultan. The boundary was easily followed on any map. From the Boiana it kept to the present Montenegrin frontier on the north till it reached the Sandjak of Novibazar, south of Berane, whence it followed the course of the river Ibar to Mitrovitza, the terminus of the railway running north from Salonica. It took in the famous plain of Kossovopolje, to which the Serbs have a sentimental claim as it was there that the Serbian kingdom was finally defeated and the Czar Lazar slain by the Sultan Murad on June 15,

1389. But the Albanians have also a sentimental claim to the field, for not only did a contingent of them fight against the Turks as allies of the Serbs, but Kara Mahmoud Pasha of Scodra, the semi-independent ruler of North Albania, defeated the Sultan's army there in 1786. The boundary included the railway line as far south as Koprulu, taking in Ferizovich, where the Albanian tribes proclaimed their independence on July 15, 1908, and Uskub, whose inhabitants are in the great majority Moslem Albanians, with about twenty-five per cent. of Bulgarians and seven per cent. of Servians. The town was taken over in April, 1912, by the Albanians from the Turkish government, and captured by the Servian army on October 26, in the same year. From Koprulu the Albanian Provisional Government's boundary ran south to the angle of the Monastir railway near Florina, between Lakes Presba and Ostrovo, and then struck east, leaving out Kastoria, to a point nearly south of Lake Presba, whence it ran due south to the Greek frontier.

This attempt at the delimitation of the boundaries would no doubt have been accepted by Europe if the Albanians were strong enough or popular enough to command a propaganda such as has been worked by the friends of the Greeks, the Bulgarians and the Servians, for it included the

country in which the Albanians are undoubtedly in the majority, and in which the other nationalities have only maintained themselves by the most unscrupulous religious and political intrigues. Religion is not the Albanians' strong point. They are Moslem, Orthodox, and Latin, and usually opportunists, with little or no organisation. But the Greeks have a magnificent organisation which dates from the Byzantine Empire, and ever since the Turkish occupation has wielded powers second only to those of the Sultan and the Porte. With the Greeks religion almost took the place of nationality, and Greek means, and has meant for centuries, not so much those of Hellenic birth, as those of the Greek or Orthodox faith. This was the strength of the Phanariots, and the lazy tolerance of the Turks allowed the Orthodox Church to become an empire within an empire. Until comparatively recent times Servians, Bulgarians, and South Albanians were all massed together in the European mind as Greeks, because they were under the Greek Patriarch, and it was not until modern Servia began to emerge under Kara George, who was by no means a religious leader, that the West awoke to the fact that there were other nationalities than the Greek under Turkish rule. As for the Bulgars, they were even more completely forgotten than the Serbs, though nowadays with the armies

ἄγχιστρον, καὶ τὸ πρῶτον ὀψάριον, τὸ ὁποῖον ἀναβῇ, λάβε, καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ, θέλεις εὑρεῖ στατῆρα· ἐκεῖνον λαβὼν δὸς εἰς αὐτοὺς δι' ἐμὲ καὶ σέ.

Κεφ. ιή.

1 Ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ ἦλθον οἱ μαθηταὶ πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, λέγοντες, Τίς ἄρα εἶναι μεγαλήτερος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ
2 τῶν οὐρανῶν; Καὶ προσκαλέσας ὁ Ἰησοῦς παιδίον ἔστησεν αὐτὸ ἐν τῷ μέ-
3 σῳ αὐτῶν, καὶ εἶπεν, Ἀληθῶς σᾶς λέγω, ἐὰν δὲν ἐπιστρέψητε, καὶ γείνητε ὡς τὰ παιδία, δὲν θέλετε εἰσέλθει εἰς
4 τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν. Ὅστις λοιπὸν ταπεινώσῃ ἑαυτὸν ὡς τὸ παιδίον τοῦτο, οὗτος εἶναι ὁ μεγαλήτερος
5 ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν· καὶ ὅστις δεχθῇ ἓν τοιοῦτον παιδίον εἰς τὸ
6 ὄνομά μου, ἐμὲ δέχεται. Ὅστις ὅμως σκανδαλίσῃ ἕνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, συμφέρει εἰς αὐτὸν νὰ κρεμασθῇ μύλου πέτρα ἐπὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ, καὶ νὰ καταποντισθῇ εἰς τὸ πέλαγος τῆς θαλάσσης.
7 Οὐαὶ εἰς τὸν κόσμον διὰ τὰ σκάνδαλα· διότι εἶναι ἀνάγκη νὰ ἔλθωσι τὰ σκάνδαλα· πλὴν οὐαὶ εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκεῖνον, διὰ τοῦ ὁποίου τὸ
8 σκάνδαλον ἔρχεται. Καὶ ἐὰν ἡ χεὶρ σου ἢ ὁ πούς σου σὲ σκανδαλίζῃ, ἔκκοψον αὐτά, καὶ ῥίψον ἀπὸ σοῦ. καλήτερόν σοι εἶναι νὰ εἰσέλθῃς εἰς τὴν ζωὴν χωλὸς ἢ κουλλός. παρὰ ἔχων δύο χεῖρας ἢ δύο πόδας νὰ ῥιφθῇς εἰς
9 τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον. Καὶ ἐὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σὲ σκανδαλίζῃ, ἔκβαλε αὐτόν, καὶ ῥίψον ἀπὸ σοῦ· καλήτερόν σοι εἶναι

νγρέ πέσκϑν' ε πάρς κὲ τς άάλς: εδέ· σι τ' ι χάπτσ̈ γόȷ̈ενς, άότε γέντσ̈ ·νξ̌ στατῖρ: μέρ-ε, ε έπϑα απύρε περ μϑα εδέ περ τσ̈ῖ.

Κρεῖ 18.

1 Να' ατξ̌ όρε έρθνς νασ̈ένȷ̈εσιτε τε ȷισσ̈ῖ, ε ι θάνς, Βάλς τσ̈ίλι ξ̈σ̈τς μξ̌ ι μάθ νάε μȷ̈ερετερῖτ τς κιέ-
2 ȷ̈εβετ; Εδέ ȷισσ̈ῖ θίρι περάνε βέτε-χεσε τῖ νξ̌ τσ̈σ̈ν τς βόγελς, εδέ ε
3 κενάρσ̈ῖ ατξ̌ νάε μέστ τ' ατύρε, ε θά, Με τς βερτέτς πο ȣ θέμ ȷ̈βδε, νάε μος ȣκεθέρσ̈ι, ε τς δένενι ποσί τσ̈σ̈νατ' ε δέγελς, νȣκε άοτε χ̈ῦνι
4 νάε μȷ̈ερετερῖτ τς κιέȷ̈εβετ. Κϑσ̈ τε ȣνγνε πρᾶ δέτεχεν' ε τῖ ποσί κύῖ τσ̈σ̈ν ι βόγελς, κύί ξ̈σ̈τς μξ̌ ι μάθ
5 νάε μȷ̈ερετερῖτ τς κιέȷ̈εβετ: εδέ κϑσ̈ τε πρέσε νξ̌ τε τίλε τσ̈σ̈ν τε βόγελς μȣ' έμεριτ τίμ, με κᾶ πρί-
6 τρε μϑα. Πό κϑσ̈ τς σκανδαλίσνε νξ̌ νγα κετά τς δέγελιτε κὲ με μȷ̈εσόνενε, ξ̈σ̈τς μίρε περ ατξ̌ τ' ι δάρετε νξ̌ γȣ̈ρ μȣλίρι μȣι κάφετ τ' ατι, εδέ τε κρέδετε νάε φθντ τε δέτιτ.
7 Μιέρ βότα νγα σκανδαλίτε: σεπσέ ξ̈σ̈τε νεβόȷ̈ε τε βίνενε σκανδαλίτε: πό μιέρ αύ νερί, πρέῖ τε τσί-
8 λιτ βιέν σκανδαλία. Εδέ νάε τς σκανδαλίστε άόρα ȷ̈ότε α κέμβα ȷ̈ότε, πρέ-ῖ, εδέ χίδι πρέῖ τέȷ̈ε: ξ̈σ̈τς μξ̌ μίρε περ τσ̈ῖ τε χ̈ῦντσ̈ νάε ȷ̈έτετ ι τσ̈άλε α άορατσ, σε τε κέσ̈ αῦ άϑαρ α αῦ κξ̌μβε, ε τε
9 χίδετσ̈ νάε ζιάρ τε πα-σόσ̈ρε. Εδέ νάε τς σκανδαλίστε σ̈ῦρι ύτ, νασίρ-ε ατξ̌, ε χίδε πρέῖ τέȷ̈ε: μξ̌ μίρε

THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.

In Greek and Albanian. This is one of the means for turning Albanians into Greeks in Southern Albania.

of the Czar Ferdinand at bay against the Balkan world, it seems almost incredible that for centuries the Bulgarian nationality was nothing but a vague memory in Europe.

But even before the Bulgarian atrocity agitation the leading men among the Bulgarians had recognised the correct line of policy, and had realised that the Greek Church and the Patriarch at Constantinople were more powerful levers than any mere political organisation could be. Therefore they worked for the establishment of a Bulgarian Church free from the control of the Patriarch, and in 1870 the Bulgarian Exarchate was founded by the permission of the Sultan. From that date the advance of Bulgaria was rapid, owing to the establishment of churches and schools. Greece and Servia took alarm, but Servia was too late to stand in line with her two rivals. These hostile Churches were the cause of the recent disturbances in Macedonia. Greeks and Bulgarians especially "converted" the villages with fire and sword, and in Macedonia and all along the Albanian frontier it must never be forgotten, in dealing with the boundary question, that Greek, Bulgarian and Servian mean the adherents of the Orthodox Church in those countries, and not necessarily men of those nationalities. This is where the Albanians have the disadvantage, and in addition they have

the further misfortune that Moslem Albanians are always known as Turks, which most emphatically they are not. Thus, in Southern Albania statistics show that so many thousand inhabitants are Turks, and so many thousand are Greeks, whereas really the men so classified are almost all Albanians of the Moslem or Orthodox belief. This is so convenient a method of gulling Europe that it is never likely to be abandoned by those who profit by it. Occasionally race and religion tally, but in the majority of cases what is indicated is the form of religion and not the race, and the Albanians, who have no Patriarch, no Exarch, no schools and no propaganda, suffer from their lack of organisation and of the first principles of scientific advertising.

It is therefore most improbable that the final boundaries of the new state will be drawn so as to include all the lands inhabited by the Albanians. Four modern kingdoms surround the territory of the descendants of the ancient Thrako-Illyrian tribes, each one hungering for a bite out of the all too poverty-stricken plains owned by the people of the hills. All four have in varying degree got the ear of Europe; all have clever spokesmen and advocates of their own and foreign countries though the Bulgarians, owing to their greed, have been driven away from the front by their former friends. The Albanians, who since the coming of the Turks

have given some of their most brilliant statesmen to Turkey, Italy and Greece, have to fight their own battle with the tongue and pen, weapons to which at home they are ill-accustomed. Even the powerful advocacy of Austria does not stand them in good stead as the rest of Europe suspects that it is actuated, not so much by the principles of abstract justice, as by the desire to prevent the Near East from becoming entirely Slavised. However, since Europe decided upon the creation of an autonomous Albania the Allies, who are admirable diplomatists, adopted the less heroic policy of attempting to strangle the infant state at birth, by doing their utmost to confine it to the barren rocks and swampy sea coast which, with the possible exception of Durazzo, no one on earth covets, so wild and stern are they.

Confident in the ignorance and heedlessness of Western Europe, the Allies proposed to deprive Albania of all that is most distinctly Albanian. Even the birthplace of George Castriot, Scanderbeg, was not to be left to the people at whose head he defeated Pashas and Sultans for years, unaided and unsupported by Christian Europe; even the ruined Castle of Lek Dukajini, the prince who codified the ancient laws and customs of the mountains; even the homes of Ali Pasha of Yanina and of Kara Mahmoud Pasha of Scodra,

were not to be included in the official Albania if the allies could have their way. All were to be handed over to Slav or Greek, and Albania was to be made into a state in name only, shorn of everything which could enable it to live as an independent and self-governing principality. The frontier which the united intellect or cunning of the four kingdoms devised will not take long to delimit. Hitherto the Black Drin has been considered by the most Slavophil boundary-monger to be the meanest limit of Albania to the north, and the river Kalamas to the south by the Philhellenes. But even those poor boundaries were now considered too generous by the ambitious Allies. On the north the frontier proposed by the Montenegrins started from the Adriatic sea coast at the mouth of the river Mati, about half-way between Alessio and Cape Rodoni, and then went north and north-east nearly to the Drin, depriving Albania of Scodra its northern capital, which is inhabited solely by Shkypetars, and of all the plain surrounding it, of the Malissori mountains which are inhabited by Albanian Roman Catholic tribes and certain tribes half Roman Catholic and half Moslem, of the Moslem tribes of the Dukajini and Liuma, and of Ipek, Jacovo and Prisrend, in all of which the Moslem Albanians are in an immense majority. Albania was thus to

be deprived of the Drin which is its principal river, and of lands in which there are but few Slavs of any sort. Montenegro did not even pretend that she went to war to liberate brother Serbs under Turkish rule, but openly declared that she would disappear as a political factor in the Balkans rather than renounce the annexation of territory inhabited by men of utterly different race and religion, who have always hated the Slav even more than the Turk.

The Servians and Bulgarians were equally preposterous in their demands. They claimed the entire upper and middle course of the Drin, including the watershed on the east of the mountains of Central Albania down to the mountains west of Lake Ochrida. Their suggested boundary thus cut Albania in two, annexed districts purely Albanian or in which Shkypetars are in a majority, and deprived the new state of any outlet to the hinterland on the east. The three Slav kingdoms were agreed in lopping off the most valuable part of Albania, but when the spoil came to be divided two of the momentary Allies quarrelled bitterly. They all claimed the right to annex Ipek, Jacovo and Prisrend, but Servia had special claims on the latter city as it was once the capital of the empire of Dushan. Moreover, Bulgaria and Servia disputed not only both banks of the Drin, but also

Dibra, which is about three quarters Albanian and the rest Bulgarian; Ochrida and Presba; and Monastir where the population is Albanian, Greek and Bulgarian, but not Servian. The events of last summer, however, disposed of the claims of Bulgaria, and left many thousands of Bulgarians in Greek and Servian hands. The Greeks were no less exacting than their allies. They claimed Avlona, but as Italy too has an eye on the Albanian coast they drew their provisional line from Gramala, a point on the shore half-way between Dukali and Khimara, and thence east to the fork of the river Voiussa near Klissura, leaving Tepelen to Albania. Thence the line went north-east by north to the proposed Servian line south-west of lake Ochrida, cutting off from the new state country that is purely Albanian as well as some districts in which the population is mixed. Even if the Greek line were drawn much further to the south-east it would still amputate territories in which the majority of the inhabitants are Albanian but are called Greek because they belong to the Greek or Orthodox Church. A glance at the map will show that the frontier which was suggested by the allies confined the Albanians to the west of the mountains which form the central backbone of the country, and to the narrow strip between those mountains and the sea. This piece

of waste land contains no river of any importance, only three towns which are better than villages, and the decayed ports of Durazzo and Avlona which might be made much of, but which, in default of any possible trade from the swamps and mountains immediately behind them, would have existed as dying harbours watching the trade of the Balkans going north and south of them, and rigorously prohibited by Slav and Greek from any participation in the business and traffic of the hinterland.

There remained the frontier proposed by Austria, which, if not generous to Albania, was at least more just than that of the allies. Imputing motives to Austria is an inconsequent sort of argument for the friends of the Slav to use against the Albanian. It is an axiom among us that all foreign nations are swayed entirely by self-interest, but charity would admit that Austria and Italy, who in a less degree supports the Albanian nationality, are not actuated by selfishness to a greater extent than any one else, and that if they show more interest in the Shkypetar it may be because they are the only two European nations who have a real and intimate knowledge of the ancient people. The Austrian line deserved to be studied with care and without prejudice, for Austrian officers have surveyed the country as far as it has been mapped

out, and Austria has been the protector of the Roman Catholic tribes in the days when they needed a protector from the Turk and not from the Orthodox Christian. It is the provisional frontier traced by more or less disinterested experts, and was a compromise between the line drawn by Ismail Kemal Bey on the one hand, and the draughtsman of the allies on the other. It followed the existing frontier on the Montenegrin border as far as a point north of Gussigne-Plava, where it made a sudden loop to the south to include those two places in Montenegro.

But the irony of the situation in this part of the world is that while Austria very justly opposed the cession of purely Albanian districts to Montenegro, she at the same time could suggest no compensation to King Nicolas, for she even more vigorously opposed his more legitimate expansion to the north in the Herzegovina, which by all the principles of nationalism belongs to Montenegro. There is no difference whatever from the racial and geographical point of view between Montenegro and the Herzegovina, and Cattaro is the natural port of the little kingdom by which it was formerly owned. The King only asked for the Malissori mountains of North Albania because he knows that as long as Austria exists he can never get Cattaro and the Herzegovina, the district from

which his family and that of many of the Montenegrins originally came. Thus blocked to the north and the south, the saying which came into vogue in Cettigne after the Russo-Turkish war—Austria is the enemy, not Turkey—has now acquired an added significance. From Gussigne-Plava the Austrian line ran to the north to keep Ipek, Jacovo, and Prisrend in Albania, but it left to the Slav the district known as Old Serbia which is inhabited almost entirely by Albanians, and took from the new state Kossovopolje, Ferizovich, Uskub, and all the adjacent lands. From the summit of the Shah Dagh just east of Prisrend, the proposed frontier ran almost due south between Lakes Ochrida and Presba, giving Dibra and the whole valley of the Black Drin to Albania, but omitting the districts to the east, where the Albanians are either in the majority or in a very strong minority. South of Lake Presba the line trends a little to the east, following the Albanian claim very closely, and reached the Greek frontier slightly to the east of Mecovon at the frontier of the late Pashaliks of Yanina and Monastir.

This scheme was doubtless the most workable of the three put forward. If it excluded many thousand Albanians from the state, it at least gave the new principality room to breathe and a chance of living, which the proposal of the Allies most

certainly did not, and on the other hand it lessened the chances of everlasting quarrels and feuds which would probably have occurred if the Albanian line had been adopted in its entirety, with its inclusion of places which have historic memories for the Serbs, but for the Albanians little besides the prosaic interest of actual possession. Roughly speaking, the adoption of the Austrian proposal would have meant a state about midway between the existing kingdoms of Servia and Montenegro in size and population, with an area of about fourteen thousand square miles and a population of a million and a half. This would have given it a fair chance of existence, and it would have had the great advantage over its rivals and neighbours of possessing an extensive seaboard and at least two harbours, which, though almost derelict, are capable of being turned into serviceable ports. Some four hundred thousand Albanians would have been left in Slav or Greek hands, and that would have been poorly compensated by the inclusion of about a hundred thousand men of alien blood.

The Austrian scheme was doubtless the most workable of those put forward for Europe's consideration, but the Powers in tracing their provisional frontier did not think fit to adopt it. Evidently they thought it more dignified to draw

a line of their own, and as far as they have decided on the boundary they have leaned towards the Slav and against the Albanian. The Austrian line was drawn half-way between those of the Allies and of the Albanian Provisional Government, and the Great Powers appear to have compromised with a delimitation half-way between the proposal of the Austrians and that of the Allies. On no other theory can the provisional frontier have been drawn, as within it no Slavs are included, whereas thousands of Albanians are left outside it to the tender mercies of their worst enemies. The boundary accepted in principle by the Powers goes a little further up the Boiana than the present frontier, and strikes inland at a stream just below Corica, where it divides the district of Anamalit, which is entirely Mahometan Albanian, and reaches the lake just west of Zogai. The line then crosses the lake to the inlets of Kastrati and Hoti, and runs north-east to the present frontier, leaving the Hoti and Gruda tribes in Montenegro, and Kastrati, Shkreli, and Klementi in Albania. Hoti is a Roman Catholic tribe of purely Albanian origin. It has always been considered the chief of the Malissori tribes, and in war-time marches at the head of the confederation. King Nicolas has of late years taken great pains to win this important tribe over from the Turks and with considerable

success, but whether it will be content to become absorbed in Montenegro and see the Klementi and Kastrati forming part of an independent Albania is another matter.

As in the Austrian scheme the boundary then makes a trend to the south, and includes Gussigne and Plava in Montenegro. These places are inhabited by fanatical Mahometans not of pure Shkypetar extraction, and Albania can well do without them. But then the boundary bends south-east, leaving out Ipek, Jacovo, and Prisrend, all of which are inhabited by a great majority of Albanians, and from a point a few miles west of Prisrend runs due south, leaving Dibra, with its mixed population of Albanians and Bulgarians, to Servia; and then following the Drin to the stream Pishkupstina, whence it keeps to the hill-tops on the west until it strikes Lake Ochrida at Lin, near the monastery of San Nicolo. In South Albania the line will leave Yanina to Greece, and drive out of the new state thousands of Albanians who are called Greeks because they belong to the Orthodox Church. From the cynical way in which large populations of Albanians are ignored and handed over to their hereditary enemies, it is obvious that the Great Powers are not overanxious to found an Albanian principality which could have a reasonable chance of success. The

nascent Albania is cut down to a minimum, and if Europe had wished to make the new state dependent on Austria or Italy, she could hardly have set about it more effectually. The only thing to be said for the scheme is that it includes Scodra and the Drin in the principality, but the thousands of Albanians who are left outside cannot be expected to acquiesce in their exclusion. There is not much future for an Albania of this sort, but the Shkypetars are a dogged race who have survived many tyrants, though so far they have only had to face death by the sword, and not strangulation by the red tape of a bureaucracy. Unfortunately, the Slav is not as the Turk, and the Powers are unlikely to follow the precedent of Eastern Rumelia, and permit at some future time the incorporation of Albania Irredenta in the foundling state of Europe.

# XVI

## THE FUTURE OF ALBANIA

HOPE for the future of the little kingdom lies in the fact that the Albanian, though a warrior and a man who prefers to go always armed, is, unlike the Montenegrin, a hard worker. Even now in Cettigne nearly all the trade and industry of the capital is in his hands, and among his own barren mountains he is a first-rate shepherd and, where he has the opportunity and the soil, a skilful agriculturist. In the towns he excels as an artificer, armourer, and maker of fine stuffs. The Albanian *zarfs*, or coffee-cup holders, of silver filigree are celebrated all over the Near East for their beautiful and delicate workmanship, and the skill of the townsman in manufacturing and ornamenting pistols and yataghans is known to every traveller. Pistol-barrels and sword-blades inlaid with gold, and pistol and gun butts inlaid with silver, prove that the Albanian has not only skill, but taste and artistry; and though a state cannot live on such products alone, these wares give evidence that the

soul of the people is not dead within them. Prisrend is one of the great centres of Albanian gunsmiths' work, and some years ago there was still living in that town an armourer who had exhibited inlaid pistols at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park.

The future of a state, whether of old growth or of new creation, lies in its commerce and industries, and of these Albania has little to show at present. Its commerce is next to non-existent and its industries are of the poorest. Within the limits traced by the Austrian geographers there is not a single line of railway, and the roads which are marked on the staff map need to be ridden over to be justly appreciated. A slight improvement has been made during the last quarter of a century, and wheeled conveyances are now to be met with in cities where their appearance would have caused a riot in the last century. Moreover, Albanians have taken to travelling in Europe to a much greater extent, and for years past the more intelligent men in the towns have been waiting grimly and patiently for the time when their independence from Turk and Slav shall enable them to prove themselves Europeans. These men at first believed that the "Constitution" of the Young Turks was the dawn of the new era; but they were soon undeceived, and their chiefs have now

got a sound and clear idea of the situation. Three lines of railway are absolutely needed. The first from Scodra, up the valley of the Drin to Prisrend, Mitrovitza, and Uskub, with a branch line running north to Jacovo, Ipek, and Novibazar, and another branch line south to Dibra and Ochrida. Secondly, a line through Central Albania from Durazzo, Elbassan, and Ochrida, to join the existing terminus at Monastir; and thirdly, a line from Yanina to the railhead at Kalabaka, to join the Greek system, with extensions to Previsa, Avlona, and Monastir. These railways would thoroughly open up Albania, allow capital to be introduced to exploit her timber trade and her mineral wealth, which is said to be enormous, and would bring down the trade of the hinterland to the Adriatic ports. All these lines could not be built at once, but roads should be improved or laid down so as to allow of motor traffic, such as has been introduced into Montenegro, to begin the opening up of the country. In fact, as for some years the trade of the state will be miserably small, a service of motors would be quite sufficient for the present, and would enable a start to be made on a small scale pending the construction of the railways.

The first thing to be considered in estimating the wealth of a country is the table of imports and exports, and under Turkish rule those of Albania

were negligible. Scodra, the capital of the north, exported little but a few skins and some sumach, though it was the headquarters of the silkworm industry of the district, and grows excellent tobacco and wine in the plains of the Kiri and Zadrima. Durazzo did some trade in wood and charcoal, and Prevesa, which tapped South Albania as well as Northern Greece, exported cattle, charcoal, cheese, fish-roes, olives, and skins, and a little timber and corn was sent out from Avlona and elsewhere. Altogether it was a miserable foundation on which to build the prosperity of a nascent state. But hitherto the Albanian has been self-supporting. He has grown enough for himself, and has shown no desire and no ability to export goods of which he produces a superfluity to pay for goods which he can buy abroad more easily than he can make them at home. He has been a man of few wants, and it would no doubt be for his happiness could he be properly policed and so be given leisure to provide for his simple necessities in the security which so far he has never enjoyed. That was at the bottom of the wish of some Albanian notables who had visited Egypt, and had noted the great change that has been wrought there, that Great Britain could be induced to undertake the administration of the country.

But the Albanians will have to shoulder their

own burden, and the future of the state as a wealth producer depends in a large degree on the proper exploitation of her timber and mineral resources. To ensure that, the mountaineers will have to relax their attitude of suspicion and defiance towards strangers, and to refrain from looking on the European who would open up the country as a robber who must be shot at the first convenient opportunity. It will take some considerable time to imbue the Shkypetar with a wholesome respect for the Limited Company and its Promoter, but when the lesson of civilisation is learned, the minerals as yet untouched will bring fabulous prosperity to the now barren mountains.

Except in the towns and plains where the Turks have had Vali Pashas, Mutesarrifs, and Kaimakams, with a plentiful backing of soldiers, the Albanians have always governed themselves, and even now the ancient laws of Lek Dukadjini, who codified the legendary tribal customs of the people, are in force in a large part of North Albania. The Turks have always played upon the divisions caused by the three religions and the many tribes, but nothing has ever denationalised the Albanian. He never describes himself as a Turk or a Greek, as so many interested foreigners do, but always as a Shkypetar. Bigoted as he too frequently is in the matter of religion, his nationality invariably has first place,

ALBANIAN MOUNTAINEERS.

A group of Roman Catholics outside a church in the mountains.

and when he grasps the fact that he is a member of an independent Albanian state, he will be prouder than ever of his race. But it cannot be expected that the old divergencies will disappear suddenly under the magic of a national government. It will be a great mistake to introduce at once a cast-iron European constitution with a strong central rule and a ready-made bureaucracy and police. The tribes are jealous of their independence, and will be as unwilling to surrender it to a national government as to the Turks. A federal state is what should be aimed at, a constitution more like that of Canada and Australia than that of Bulgaria or Servia. The country readily divides itself into provinces, and, taking the boundaries so far as they have been laid down by Europe, Scodra, with the Malissori and the plains of the Kiri and Zadrima, would make a county or province of mixed Roman Catholic and Moslem religion; the Mirdites would form a Roman Catholic province ready-made, with a Prince and system of government complete; Elbassan or Tirana would be the capital of Central Albania where Moslems predominate; and Avlona of South Albania where the inhabitants are mostly Orthodox.

Scodra is the most important town, but Durazzo, if it were the terminus of a railway system, would probably be found the most convenient spot for

federal capital. Setting aside their heroes of antiquity, the modern Albanians have shown in Italy and Greece that they can produce statesmen, and they have given the reigning dynasty to Egypt so that there need be no fear that capable men will be wanting to take up the reins of government. The King of the country, the Prince of Wied, had to be chosen from the families of European sovereigns, as the rulers of Greece, Roumania, and Bulgaria were chosen, for in Albania there is no chieftain who holds the position which King Nicolas has in Montenegro, or even King Peter in Servia. The three outstanding personalities of Albania to-day are Ismail Kemal Bey, Essad Pasha, and Prenck Bib Doda Pasha, the hereditary chieftain of the Mirdites, but two are Moslems and the other a Roman Catholic, and the choice of any one of them would inevitably have led to jealousy and quarrels. Under the sovereign chosen by Europe, Ismail Kemal Bey will probably become the ruler of the southern province, and Prenck Bib Doda Pasha of Mirditia, where his ancestors have been acknowledged chiefs for centuries. In the districts of Tirana and Elbassan Essad Pasha is the obvious chief, and in or round Scodra there are the representatives of great families which have always had much local influence, and frequently local rule. Each district would be more likely to settle down

under its own chiefs and elders, making a federal state with a discreet and tactful central government. To attempt to make a hard and fast modern principality of the loosely knit tribes of the north and south will be deliberately to court disaster.

The greatest misfortune that has befallen Albania in modern times was the opening of the Balkan railways to Salonica which tapped the entire trade of the country, except the narrow strip on the sea coast. It meant stagnation to cities like Scodra, Elbassan, and Yanina, and ruin to the ports of Durazzo and Avlona. The trade of Prisrend and all the districts near, which formerly went along the Drin valley route to Scodra and Dulcigno or San Giovanni di Medua, was diverted to the railway which ran close by. The commerce of Monastir, Ochrida, and, in a less degree of Elbassan, which found an outlet at Durazzo, was completely lost when the line was extended from Salonica to Monastir. Salonica is the great rival of the Albanian ports, but if the railway system is properly built, much of the old trade will be recovered and turned towards the Adriatic, Italy and Trieste. Another help to trade in the interior would be the regulating of the Drin, which at present is a torrent, and a hindrance rather than an aid to traffic. The great plain of the Zadrima to the south and east of Scodra will have to be taken

in hand by the engineers, and properly drained by keeping the Drin, the Boiana, and the Kiri to their own river beds. When that is done harbour works might be built at Alessio and San Giovanni di Medua. On the building of railways, the canalisation of the rivers and the making of harbours the industrial and commercial future of Albania depends, but so far nothing has been done, and the communications and outlets of the country are in a deplorable condition.

Politically, Albania will require to be saved from her friends no less than guarded from her enemies. She will be surrounded by Slavs on the north and east, and by Greeks on the south, and her neighbours will do all that they can to strangle her with a view to that final partition which has been denied them now. The new kingdom's active friends are Austria and Italy, and both of them look to her as their lever for keeping the balance of power in the Near East. Albania has always been most friendly with her neighbour across the sea, and at one time was governed from Rome. Moreover, Italy has generally been the refuge of exiles from the Turkish shore of the Adriatic, and many villages in South Italy are entirely of Shkypetar descent. No doubt Italy will see to it that Albania does not become an appanage of Austria, but very little help will be needed, for with the

Albanian independence is life, and he has fought for it against all comers.

The natural and easiest line for the new kingdom to take in the future is an understanding or alliance with Greece. At the present moment Greece is the ally of Servia, as she was of Bulgaria till Turkey was defeated, but this state of things will probably end soon. The Greeks and the Albanians are the only two non-Slavonic peoples south of the Danube, and they are outnumbered many times by the hordes of Slavs. If they are to exist another fifty years the kingdom of Greece and the federal state of Albania must become allies under the protection of Europe. The two races are kindred, they have the same hatred of the Slav, and they are equally in danger of being wiped off the map by a Big Bulgaria or a Greater Servia. Their command of the Levant gives them a position of mastery, but only by an alliance can they get the full benefit of it, and avoid being swept away by the Slavonic races. The Turk is now no longer the enemy; for the Albanian and the Greek he is the Bulgar and the Serb; for the Bulgar and the Serb he is the Teuton. In a very few years the Near Eastern Question will resolve itself into the struggle of the Slav and the Teuton, and in an alliance with Greece Albania may have a great part to play in the future.

# XVII

## THE ALBANIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

NOT the least puzzling of the many problems which will have to be solved by the makers of the new Albanian kingdom is the position of the Roman Catholics of North Albania. They form a little enclave of worshippers faithful to the Pope, who have held to their ancient form of religion, and have steadfastly refused to bow the knee either to Orthodoxy or to Islam. The Orthodox Slavs are much older enemies of the Roman Catholic Albanians than the Mahometans are, and these obstinate Shkypetars, with Scodra as their capital and Bishopric, have remained through the centuries true to their allegiance to Rome, surrounded by Orthodox Slavs and Moslem Albanians, and with no nearer neighbours of their own religion than the people of the Dalmatian coast. It was with dazed astonishment that the Roman Catholic Albanians learned there was some probability that their ancient city of Scodra, which had been their capital and the see of their bishops and archbishops long before

the Serbs crossed the Danube, would be handed over to Montenegro, whose only claim to it was that the Serbian Czar Dushan had held it by force of conquest for a few years in the fourteenth century, and that his predecessors in the headship of the Serbs had been its intermittent masters when they were strong enough to overcome the native Albanians, the Byzantine Empire, and the Bulgarian Czars. Fortunately this injustice has been averted by the firmness of Austria and Europe, though even now, as the northern frontier is drawn, many Roman Catholic Albanians will be included in the new Servia and Montenegro.

The Roman Church in North Albania is represented by three different orders. First come the bishops and parochial clergy under the Metropolitan Archbishop of Scodra and Dioclea, whose seat and cathedral are at Scodra. Independent of the Metropolitan is the Mitred Abbot of Orosh, the ecclesiastical head of the Mirdites, who since 1888 has ranked as an archbishop, and is responsible solely to the Vatican. Secondly, there are the Franciscan monks, who have several monasteries in the country, one even at Moslem Ipek, the place which has been surrendered to Servia or Montenegro in spite of its being a purely Albanian town. The Franciscans are under the protection of Austria, who also claims a protectorate over the

bishops, though they and the parochial clergy insist that they are Shkypetars, and independent of every one but the Pope. Lastly come the Jesuits, who have a college and schools at Scodra, and are supported by Italy, chiefly as a makeweight against the influence of Austria. There is one sign which marks the priests of the Albanian Catholic Church, foreign and native-born alike, and that is the moustache. Rome allows her priests *in partibus infidelium* to wear the beard, but in Albania they have to wear the moustache or they would be laughed at as women, and be chased out of their parishes. All the priests and monks, young and old, wear the moustache with soutane and frock, and only in Scodra do they ever wear a hat, the red fez of the Turks or the white felt skull-cap of the Albanian mountaineers being worn by them in the country. When Mehemet Ali Pasha was murdered at Jacovo he had with him an Albanian Franciscan named Padre Pietro, who was well known in and near Scodra. The insurgents had determined to kill this priest as he was suspected of intriguing to hand the town over to Austria or Servia, and when the last struggle came and the Pasha rushed out of the burning tower to be cut down by the besiegers, Padre Pietro doffed his Franciscan frock, put on the white felt costume of a mountaineer, thrust a couple of pistols and a

yataghan into his *sila*, or pistol belt, and stalked out among the Albanian hillmen as one of them, unrecognised by his enemies. These militant priests are Shkypetars first of all, against Turk, Slav, and Frank, and, secondly, Roman Catholic against Moslem and Orthodox Slav.

Albania was finally made a Roman province by Augustus, and as Christianity spread over the empire the Thrako-Illyrian tribes became converted like their neighbours. That the Albanians became Christians early is proved by the fact that Galerius thought it necessary to persecute them in the opening years of the fourth century before Constantine's Edict of Milan in 312 A.D. At the partition of the empire in 395 A.D. Epirus, Thessaly, and Greece, though they were separated from the Prefecture of Illyricum, continued to be dependent on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Pope, for in those days no one had any conception that there could be more than one Church on earth. During the next five hundred years Christians became reconciled to the idea that the Church was split into factions and sects, but in spite of that it was not until after the final separation of the Pope from the Eastern Empire in 800 A.D. and the quarrel with the Iconoclasts, that the division of the Church into East and West was made apparent. North

Albania possesses one of the most ancient bishoprics in the world, as Durazzo claims to have been founded by St. Paul, who preached in Illyria and New Epirus. In 58 A.D. Durazzo is said to have had seventy Christian families under a Bishop named Appollonius, and this is worth noting, as there seems a tendency to look on all Albanians as "Turks," and to include the Orthodox Albanians of the south among the Greeks, and the Roman Catholics of the north among the Orthodox Slavs. But even if we have doubts about St. Paul at Durazzo, it is historically certain that there were Bishops of the Christian Church in Albania soon after the persecution of Galerius.

In 387 A.D. Scodra was the seat of an Archbishop, and in 431 A.D. Archbishop Senecius of Scodra took part in the Council of Ephesus. There were only three Archbishops of Scodra in the early Church, and Albania was placed under the Metropolitan of Salonica in the fourth century, and of Ochrida by Justinian in the sixth century. When the Western line of Emperors ended with Romulus Augustulus in 476 A.D. the ecclesiastical power of Rome became gradually emphasised at the expense of its imperial status. The election of the Pope was confirmed by the Emperor at Constantinople, but Pope Gregory

III. in 731 A.D. was the last Pope so confirmed, and there was more than a touch of irony in the fact that the Emperor concerned was Leo the Isaurian. Leo was an ecclesiastical reformer, and Gregory III. at once called a Council at Rome by which the Iconoclasts were excommunicated in a body. Leo sent an expedition to arrest the Pope for his insubordination, but it came to nothing, for in Italy the Pope had become almost the equal of the Emperor. Leo, therefore, in 733 A.D. confiscated the Papal estates in the East, and placed South Italy, Sicily, Greece, Illyria and Macedonia under the Patriarch of Constantinople. But the Pope still claimed, and was generally accorded, the headship of the Church, and that state of things went on, the Albanian Church being subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople, but in supreme matters paying allegiance to the Pope at Rome, until 858 A.D., when matters came to a crisis. It was the time of the quarrel over the election of Photius as Patriarch, and the deposition of Ignatius which it was necessary to ratify. No General Council could be summoned without the concurrence of the Pope, and the Emperor Michael had to send Ambassadors to Rome to ask Pope Nicholas I. to call a Council to settle the disputes of the Eastern Church. The Pope

agreed to do so, but at the same time he demanded the restoration of the Papal estates, the re-establishment of the Papal jurisdiction over the Illyrian provinces, and various other matters of which his predecessor had been deprived by Leo III. The General Council was held at Constantinople in 861 A.D., and Ignatius was duly deposed, but the Papal Legates were so weak that they did not obtain the restoration of Albania and the rest, and consequently were disowned at Rome.

The Albanian Church had little to do with the subsequent acts in the drama of Photius, and with most of the decisions of the Eighth General Council of the Church in 878 at Constantinople. But in the intervals of the great game played by the Emperor Basil, Photius and the Pope, to the disadvantage of Rome, the question of the Albanian hierarchy was settled for the time being at a Council of Dalmatia in 877 A.D. In addition to the Legates of the Pope and of the Greek Emperor, George Archbishop of Salonica, and many Dalmatian, Croatian and Serbian Bishops were present, with the Duke of Croatia and the Zhupan of Serbia, in order to divide and arrange the hierarchy of the Church in those parts. The Albanian Church was separated from Macedonia, and this it was which

kept the North Albanians faithful to Rome. If they had remained under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Salonica or Ochrida they would doubtless now be following the Greek and not the Latin ritual. When the Dalmatian Council came to its decision it seemed to have only decided on a question of local governance, whereas in reality it was putting North Albania under the Pope and not under the Patriarch. Dioclea was raised to the position of a Metropolitan see, and under it were placed twelve bishoprics, namely, Antivari, Budua, Cattaro, Dulcigno, Svacia, Scodra, Drivasto, Pulati, Sorbium, Bosnia, Tribunium, and Zachlumium. The province of Dioclea was extended over the old province of Scodra, and over Serbia which was attached to it, but the arrangement only lasted in its integrity for half a century. Simeon, Czar of Bulgaria, was at that time subduing the peninsular under his mushroom Empire, and in 927 A.D., the last year of his life, he took and utterly destroyed the city of Dioclea, and left nothing but the ruins, which are still to be seen at Dukla, about two and a half miles north of Podgorica, where the rivers Zeta and Maracha meet.

The invasion might well have resulted in uniting Albania to the Patriarch, but it had the opposite effect, as John Archbishop of Dioclea

fled to Ragusa, whither some of his Bishops followed him, and thenceforward considered the little republic as the seat of their Metropolitan. But some of the Bishops, for example, the Bishops of Antivari, Svacia, Dulcigno and Cattaro, passed over to the see of Spalato, and as more than a century elapsed between the destruction of Dioclea and the foundation of the Archbishopric of Antivari, there were many and bitter quarrels between the Archbishops of Ragusa and Spalato concerning the authority over the provincial Bishops. In 1030 A.D. Antivari, Svacia, Dulcigno and Cattaro certainly belonged to Spalato, for Archbishop Dabralis of that city summoned them to a provincial council as Metropolitan. The four Bishops proceeded to Spalato by sea, and on their way were overtaken by a storm and wrecked. The drowning of these Bishops caused the Archiepiscopal see of Dioclea to be revived at Antivari, as the people of the four cities petitioned the Pope to separate them from Spalato on account of the danger of the voyage for their Bishops. The Pope then took Antivari, Svacia, Dulcigno, and Cattaro from Ragusa and founded a new Archbishopric at Antivari. This happened about 1034 A.D., when Benedict IX. was Pope, and Alexander II., in 1062 A.D., in a letter to Peter, Archbishop of Dioclea and Antivari, mentions

Cattaro, Svacia, Scodra, Drivasto, Pulati, Serbia (old), Bosnia, and Tribunium as belonging to the see. It afterwards lost Serbia (old), Cattaro, Bosnia and Tribunium, but from time to time Sappa, Sarda, Arbania, Dagno, Dulcigno, and Budua were added to it.

The Archbishopric of Antivari was not established without violent protests on the part of the Archbishop of Ragusa, and for over a century, while the schism between the East and the West was being consummated, the Albanian Churches were occupied with quarrels over their local jurisdiction. The Archbishop of Ragusa complained that Antivari and its subject churches were taken away from him, and on account of his continual intrigues and representations to the Pope, the Bishoprics of the province of Dioclea were replaced under his authority about the beginning of the twelfth century. The Bishops of Antivari frequently refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Archbishops of Ragusa, and, wearied out with these feuds in the midst of so many matters of vital importance, Pope Alexander III. again made Antivari an Archbishopric about 1178 A.D. The first Archbishop of the restored line was Gregory, and his successors were John I. about 1199 and John II. about 1248, but the quarrels with Ragusa still continued. At last Pope

Innocent IV. decided to put an end to these disputes, but there is no record of how the affair was arranged. However, from two letters of Innocent IV. dated 1253, one to Guffridus, successor to John II., whom he calls Archbishop of Antivari, and the other to the Bishops Suffragan of Antivari, it would appear that the decision was given against Ragusa. Moreover, from that time the Metropolitan of Antivari always held his Bishopric peaceably, and quarrels between the two sees came to an end.

The Council of Dioclea was held about 1199 A.D. in the province of Antivari, and twelve canons for reforming abuses and morals were drawn up. The presidents were John and Simon, Papal Legates; and the signatories were the Legates, John Archbishop of Dioclea and Antivari, Domenicus Archpresbyter of Arbania, Peter Bishop of Scodra, John Bishop of Pulati, Peter Bishop of Drivasto, Domenicus Bishop of Svacia, Natalis Bishop of Dulcigno, and Theodore Bishop of Sarda. The Council was that of the Province of Dioclea and Antivari, which was entirely Albanian and did not contain a single Bishop of Bosnia, Dalmatia, or Serbia. It was the one Province which remained faithful to Rome when the Slav Provinces transferred their allegiance to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and it remains to-day exactly as

it was over seven hundred years ago, except that Antivari and Dulcigno having been given to Montenegro in 1878 and 1880, these Bishoprics have been merged in the see of Scodra. The Province has been overwhelmed beneath the waves of Slav and Turk in those seven hundred years, but the tenacity of the Shkypetar has preserved his nationality and his religion in spite of temptation and persecution.

The Archbishops of Dioclea and Antivari (or Scodra) have always added to their style and title the appellation of Primate of the Kingdom of Servia, although the Serbs have belonged to the Orthodox Church since the crowning of King Stefan Urosh by his brother St. Sava in 1222 A.D. Owing to their distance from Rome and their knowledge of Constantinople as the Imperial city, both Bulgars and Serbs were always more attracted to the form of Christianity affected by the Patriarch than to that administered by the Pope, but it is quite possible that the Zhupans and Czars of Serbia would have remained under the shadow of St. Peter's had the Pope been a little more accommodating in his recognition of Serbian royalty. The Serbs were converted to Christianity in the middle of the ninth century, and some two hundred years later the Grand Zhupan Michael Voislavich temporarily put himself under the Pope for political

reasons. When Stefan Nemanya came to the Serbian throne the Roman Catholics were persecuted for the first time since the far-off days of Galerius, although the Zhupan was always quarrelling with the Emperor of Constantinople. In 1195 A.D. Stefan Nemanya abdicated in favour of his eldest son, Stefan Urosh, and the new Zhupan, being an ambitious man, at once put the religious convictions of Serbia in the market. Stefan was a diplomatist rather than a soldier, and he determined to be recognised as an independent king and no longer to be a vassal of the Emperor. Pope Innocent III. bid high for Serbia, and in 1217 Stefan Urosh was crowned by the Papal Legate, but the Pope was unbending in the matter of jurisdiction, and in Stefan's younger brother Rastko, or St. Sava, he had a skilled enemy. St. Sava easily obtained the recognition of Serbian independence from the Emperor Baldwin, who had been placed on the throne of the Emperors by the Latin conquest, and as a Latin Patriarch had been installed in Constantinople, he was able to persuade the Greek Patriarch and Prelates to acknowledge the Serbian Church as independent by threatening to go over to Rome if they refused. Sava was successful all along the line. He was consecrated first Archbishop of the independent Church of Serbia in 1220 A.D. at Nicea, and two

years later crowned his brother Stefan King or Czar of Serbia at Zitcha.

The Albanians and their Bishops, uninfluenced by these bargainings, remained faithful to Rome, but the Czars of Serbia did not interfere with the Province until 1312 A.D., when Stefan VI. began to persecute the Latins under the inspiration of the Serbian clergy. The Pope, therefore, advised the Albanian chiefs to refuse to go to the Czar's court, and in 1320 A.D. the Shkypetar nobles formed a League for the maintenance of their religion. In the following year Stefan VII. Urosh succeeded his father, and in his reign the Albanians seem to have been allowed to practise their religion in peace. Both Stefan VII. Urosh and Dushan intrigued with the Pope, and Dushan sent Ambassadors to Rome in 1354, but even had either of these great rulers wished to acknowledge the Pope, the Serbs were too stubbornly Orthodox for such sagacious men to have entertained the idea. Dushan's laws, published in 1349, show him to have been violently opposed to the "Latin heretics," and probably the Albanians would have been persecuted again had they not been a first-rate fighting people and for that reason invaluable to Dushan in his twin ambitions of driving the Turks out of Europe and of getting possession of the Byzantine throne. But Dushan died suddenly

when within sight of Constantinople, and his ephemeral empire immediately collapsed. This was in 1356, and the Albanians at once became independent under George Balsha, a Norman Baron who had been serving under the warrior Dushan. Balsha appears to have been accommodating in the matter of religion, for in 1368 he became a Roman Catholic, his conversion from Orthodoxy proving the strength of religious feeling in Albania, and the hatred felt by the Shkypetars for the Serbs, who had been lording it over them in Church and State.

For the next hundred years Scodra and the adjoining country were alternately under the rule of the Balshas and the Venetians, and the Albanian Roman Catholic Church had peace. In 1470 Scodra was surrendered by the Venetians to the Turkish besiegers, and Archbishop John was sent to Constantinople, but the ship in which he sailed being attacked by the Venetians, he was put to death to prevent a rescue. His palace became the residence of the Cadi, but the Roman Catholics were still allowed their churches and freedom of worship. The Archbishops fixed their seat at Budua until 1609 A.D., when Archbishop Marinus obtained a firman from the Sultan granting the fullest freedom and privileges to the Roman Catholics; the Archbishop received a salary from

the Turkish treasury, and was given authority to perform all the rites and ceremonies of the Church and to levy tithes and dues from his flock. In spite of all these privileges the Archbishop and the Bishops of Durazzo, Scodra and Alessio placed themselves at the head of a conspiracy to hand over Albania to the Venetians in 1645. The plot was discovered, and thenceforward the Christians were oppressed and humiliated by the Turks as political intriguers with Venice. Many of the nobles became Moslems, and from them are descended the present Beys and Aghas of Scodra and its district, while many more Christians fled into Venetian territory to escape persecution. In those evil days many Churches were fused together, and in the last century Budua was taken from the Metropolitan of Antivari. Since the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 Antivari has belonged to Montenegro, and the seat of the Archbishop of Dioclea has been fixed at Scodra.

The Metropolitan Archbishopric of Dioclea, which was founded in 877 A.D., as the centre of an independent North Albanian Church has, in the thousand years which have passed since then, been moved to Ragusa, Antivari, and lastly to Scodra, but the prelate still retains the title of Metropolitan Archbishop of Dioclea and Primate of the Kingdom of Servia. The

principal diocese, Scodra, is not mentioned before the fourth century, but it was probably included in the Province of Salonica, which then extended over all Illyria. In the sixth century the Emperor Justinian placed it under the Primate of Ochrida, but it continued to be the seat of an Archbishop until the Council of Dalmatia in 877 A.D., when it was reduced to a Bishopric. Bassus, the first Archbishop, lived about 387 A.D., and Archbishop Senecius was a signatory at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. After the destruction of Dioclea, Scodra followed the fortunes of the Province in the quarrels between Ragusa and Spalato. When the Turks occupied Scodra the Cathedral was the church of St. Stephen Protomartyr, but it was soon turned into a mosque. From that time forward the Bishops of Scodra usually lived in one of the villages near the city, and in 1701 the thirty-eighth Bishop, who lived at Jubany, was hanged at Scodra by the Turks. For many years the Catholics of Scodra had no cathedral, but worshipped in an open field surrounded by a thorn hedge. It was not until 1858 that the firman allowing them to build a cathedral was read, and then it took several years to erect the building. In 1843 a College which had been founded by the Jesuits was destroyed, but the priests returned

later on and have not only built a seminary for those anxious to enter the priesthood, but also large schools for the children of both sexes. In addition to this the Franciscans have a chapel, an important monastery, and a school for children. The Cathedral is a great, bare building capable of holding a good-sized crowd of worshippers, but almost destitute of any attempt at ornament or decoration. It was injured during the Montenegrin bombardment in the late war.

Five other Bishoprics have been absorbed in the diocese of Scodra—Antivari, Dulcigno, Drivasto, Svacia, and Palachiensis. Antivari has already been dealt with; Dulcigno is first heard of at the Council of 877 A.D., and after the fall of Dioclea some of its Bishops followed Spalato and some Ragusa. The diocese was small, but it possessed a church dedicated to the Virgin, a College of Canons, and a clergy of the second order. Andrew, its twenty-ninth Bishop, died in 1565, and after its capture by the Turks it was merged in the see of Scodra. Drivasto, also dating from 877 A.D., is now nothing but a modern Albanian village at the foot of a peaked hill, on the top of which are the shattered ruins of a wall, the only remains of a once powerful castle. It is about nine miles distant from Scodra

on the river Kiri. In 1477 the Ottoman army took the place by storm after a gallant defence of four weeks. Drivasto had thirty-five Bishops, and about 1640 A.D., the town having become nothing but a thinly peopled village, the see was merged in that of Scodra. Svacia, or Scias, is a small district between Scodra and Dulcigno. It was taken by the Turks in 1571, and in 1610 Marinus Archbishop of Antivari found the town destroyed, although the Church of St. John the Baptist was still standing. It was probably made a Bishopric in 877 A.D., and after the death of Thomas the twenty-second Bishop in 1530 the diocese was united to Scodra. Palachiensis, or Balleacensis, was another Bishopric of which very little is known. It was situated on the river Drin and is first mentioned in 1062 A.D., when Pope Alexander II., in a letter to the Archbishop of Antivari, assigned it to the Metropolitan of that city, but for three hundred years afterwards it is not mentioned in the catalogues until the early part of the fourteenth century, when William is spoken of as its Bishop in a letter of Pope Clement VI. The eighth and last Bishop was Daniel, who was appointed in 1478, and after him no further mention is made of the diocese.

The Archbishop of Durazzo was formerly independent of Dioclea, and still has under him one

Bishopric, that of Alessio, which formerly included the north of Mirditia and many of the villages in the plain of the Zadrima. The church at Alessio is very ancient, and is said to have been founded in Apostolic times, but the first mention of it occurs in the sixth century. The Archbishop of Durazzo is also the titular Bishop of Arbania, a see of which but little is known. It was probably adjacent to Croia in Mirditia, and is first heard of in 1166 A.D., when Lazarus was Bishop. Marcus Scura was the twenty-fourth and last Bishop of Arbania. He was appointed in 1635, and in 1640 was translated to the Archbishopric of Durazzo. In 1656 he went to Rome, where he died on the last day of 1657, and Arbania was then merged in the see of Durazzo. The Archbishop of Uskub was also formerly outside the Province of Dioclea, but is now included in it. The Archbishop has long resided at Prisrend, as there are but few Roman Catholics at Uskub. He has jurisdiction over the Province of Old Servia, where most of his flock are *Lavamani*, or people who practise Christianity in secret while openly professing themselves Moslems. The city which gave its name to the Diocese of Pulati, was situated about thirty miles north-east of Scodra, among precipitous and almost inaccessible mountains, but it was utterly destroyed and even its site is unknown.

Its Bishop is first mentioned in 877 A.D., but from 1345 to 1520 the Diocese was divided into Major and Minor Pulati. The two Bishops frequently quarrelled, and about 1450 Scanderbeg himself interposed to stop their dissensions. After the conquest by the Turks most of the Bishops were absentees and the country fell into a very bad state; in fact, one Bishop, Vicentius, refused in 1656 to accept the Bishopric and fled into Bosnia, where he was arrested, and for his contumacy imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo. The see is now divided into seven parishes, all of which, except Giovanni, the seat of the Bishop, are in charge of Franciscan monks.

Lastly, there is the Bishopric of Sappa and Sarda, which is the diocese of the great plain of the Zadrima. Only a few traces are now left of Sarda, which was an ancient town on the east bank of the Drin, about eight miles from Scodra. Its church was dedicated to the Virgin, and the Bishopric was founded about the year 1190. Sappa was a city in the Zadrima some fifteen miles south-east of Scodra, but no traces are now left of it. The first church dedicated to the Archangel Michael was destroyed by an earthquake and was replaced by the present church of St. Giorgio, which is one of the finest in Albania. The Bishopric was founded about 1390 A.D., but in the

year 1491 Sappa and Sarda were joined by Pope Innocent VIII. and, with Dagno, were placed under a single Bishop. The Bishopric of Dagno or Dayno took its name from a small town which was situated about ten miles east of Scodra, but which is now destroyed. The first Bishop was Donatus in 1361, and he had only ten successors. The last Bishop, William, was appointed in 1520; he was a French Dominican, and is of interest as having been sometime Vicar-Bishop of Winchester. Before his time Sappa, Sarda, and Dagno had been united, and certainly from the year 1491 until now have been under the same administration.

The religious needs of the Principality of Mirditia are looked after by the Mitred Abbot of Orosh. He was formerly under the Archbishop of Scodra, but since 1888 has been independent and has been given the rank of an Archbishop. He is the Abbot of the ancient Benedictine Abbey of St. Alexander of the Mirdites, and has under him all the parishes of Mirditia. The Roman Catholics of North Albania thus extend from the old frontier of Montenegro on the north to Ipek, Jacovo, and Prisrend on the north-east, to the river Drin on the east, and to Durazzo on the south. They are thickest in Mirditia, the Zadrima, Scodra, and the Malissori mountains. They have withstood for centuries the persecutions and the

blandishments of the Orthodox Slavs and of the Moslem Turks, and with the dogged obstinacy of their race have remained faithful to Rome, though the Pope has been able to do but little for them. Probably many of the Moslem Albanians will now revert to the religion of their forefathers, but the men of Scodra and Mirditia, who have remained steadfast to their beliefs through the centuries, merit at least as much consideration and help from Europe as the more fashionable Orthodox Serbs of Servia and Montenegro.

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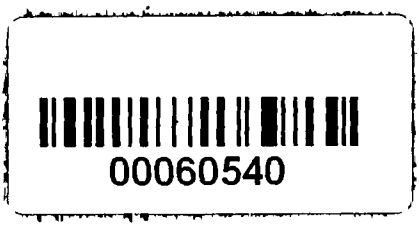
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